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EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

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Short Stories

EDITED BY ARTHUR PEARSON

GINGERNUTS.

THE King of Macronia (the land of macaroons), who for some time past had been in the prime of life, had just arisen and was seated undressed beside his bed. His house minister was there and handed him his hose; in the heel of one sock was a hole. The King was wont to pay more attention to his beautiful boots than to whole socks; however, the hole did not escape his sharp eyes. In disgust he took the sock out of the minister's hand and pushed his forefinger through the hole clear up to his knuckle, saying:

"Of what use is it, that I am king, since I have no wife? What do you say to my marrying?"

"Your Majesty, that is a sublime thought, a thought that would certainly have occurred to me, if I may make so bold, had I not felt that Your Majesty most assuredly would deign to utter it for yourself."

"Beautiful!" replied the King, "but do you believe that I shall be able to find a wife suitable for me?"

"Pooh! Ten where others could find but one," said the courtier.

"A princess to please me must be clever and beautiful, and there is one point on which I lay especial stress: you know how fond I am of gingernuts. In my whole kingdom there is not a person who understands how to bake them exactly right, and the princess whom I choose must know how to do this to perfection."

When the minister heard this he gave a whistle of dismay, but quickly collecting himself, said:

"A king like your Majesty will, without doubt, find a princess who understands how to bake gingernuts."

"We shall see, we shall see," said the King, and on the very same day, accompanied by his minister, he began a tour of the kingdoms of his different neighbours, whom he knew had princesses to give in marriage.

Only three princesses were found who were beautiful and clever enough to suit the King, and of these not one could bake gingernuts.

"I really cannot bake gingernuts," said the first princess, in answer to the King's question, "but I can make beautiful little almond cakes. Wouldn't those suit you?"

"No," replied the King, "I must have gingernuts."

The second princess, in reply to the same question, mocked at the King and said angrily:

"What nonsense! Princesses who can bake gingernuts do not exist."

The King fared worse at the hands of the third, who was the most beautiful and the most charming.

She gave the King no opportunity to ask his question, but took things into her own hands, and demanded whether he knew how to play on the Jew's harp. And when he said he did not she sent him away.

He pleased her very much, she admitted, but she was so extravagantly fond of music of the Jew's harp that she would never marry a man who could not play it.

The King and his minister returned home, and as they alighted from their carriage the King said:

"Nothing has come of all this!"

"Nothing, your Majesty," said the minister mournfully.

"What shall I do?" sighed the King. "I must have a wife."

"If you would only give up the gingernuts," ventured the minister timidly.

"For the good of my people I will," exclaimed the noble King, and he resolved to marry the princess whom he had first sought.

"She is the one who knows how to bake almond cakes," he said. "Go and ask her if she will be my wife."

The minister went, returned the next day, and said

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she was no longer in the matrimonial market, for she had married the king of the Land of Capers.

"Then go to the second princess," said the King. Again the minister returned without having accomplished anything, for this princess had died.

Then the King thought a long time. He absolutely must have a wife, so he ordered the minister to go to the third princess and see if she had changed her mind. The minister obeyed, though he did it unwillingly, for his wife assured him that his errand was a useless one.

The King anxiously awaited his return. His mind was on her question concerning the Jew's harp, and the remembrance of it was most annoying.

The third princess received the minister very cordially. She said she had changed her mind about marrying a man who could play the Jew's harp.

"Dreams are but vain and empty things, especially those of youth." She realized that her wish could not be fulfilled, and as the King pleased her, she had decided to marry him.

The minister rode home as fast as his horse could go, and the King embraced him, and conferred so many decorations on him that he had to wear some of them on his head.

The town was trimmed with bunting, garlands were thrown across the streets from house to house, and the marriage was so splendidly celebrated that the people could talk of nothing else for a fortnight.

All went well with the King and Queen for a year. The King had quite forgotten his gingernuts and the Queen her Jew's harp.

However, the King got out of bed one morning with the wrong foot foremost, and after that, of course, all went wrong. It rained the entire day; the imperial globe fell down, and the little cross on the top broke off; the court painter brought a new globe on which Macronia was painted red instead of blue, as he had been ordered, and to cap the climax the Queen had a headache.

It came to pass that the wedded pair quarrelled for the first time. Why or wherefore, they knew not. In short, the King was cross and the Queen was snappy, and would have the last word. After the quarrel had gone on for some time the Queen shrugged her shoulders disdainfully and said:

"You've found fault the entire day. And why, I pray? You, who can't so much as play the Jew's harp!"

He retorted sharply:

"You've nothing to say. You can't even bake gingernuts."

For the first time the Queen did not reply, but remained quiet, and without exchanging another word they went to their respective rooms.

The Queen seated herself in the corner of the sofa and wept, and thought sadly:

"What a foolish wife you are! Have you lost your reason? You should not have begun a quarrel so stupidly."

The King paced up and down his room, rubbed his hands and said:

"It is truly a bit of good luck that my wife can't bake gingernuts. Why did I answer her when she reproached me for not knowing how to play on the Jew's harp?"

After repeating this three or four times he felt more cheerful. He began to whistle his favourite tune, examined the large portrait of the Queen, which hung in his room, mounted a chair, and with his handerchief brushed off a cobweb that hung over her nose, and said:

"She is surely fretting, my good little wife. I'll see what she's doing."

He went down the long hall to her door. All had gone wrong on this day, the servants had even forgotten the lamps, although it was eight o'clock and quite dark. He entered the room, putting out his hands before him so as not to stumble against the furniture. Suddenly he felt something warm.

"Who is it?" he said.

"It is I," replied the Queen.

"What's the matter, my pet?"

"I want to ask your forgiveness," said the Queen, "for having been so cross."

"You don't need to do that at all," said the King, throwing his arms about her neck. "I'm more to blame than you are. Let's forget all about it. There are two words that we'll never allow used in our kingdom, Jew's harp and——"

"And gingernuts," interrupted the Queen laughing, as she secretly wiped two little tears from her eyes.

J. LEANDER.

A SATIRICAL innkeeper advertises his house as "the only second-class hotel in the world."

A PHYSICIAN was lecturing lately on the ignorance of people of their own complaints, and said that a lady once asked him what his next lecture would be upon, and being told "the circulation of the blood," replied that she should certainly attend, for she had been troubled with that complaint a long time.

A TRAMP was arrested, taken before an Australian justice, and sentenced to three months. His worship, in explaining the sentence, remarked that while there was no evidence that the prisoner had been guilty of any crime, he thought it prudent to commit him, as he had the wild, haggard look of a man about to start a newspaper.

WHEN L., the Irish comedian, was starring once at a small town in his native land, a rehearsal was called on Monday morning for the night's piece.

"Now," said L. to the manager, "I want a posse of constabulary on the bridge, a group of male and faymale peasants on the right, and a squad of soldiery on the left. How many supers have ye got?"

"Two, sir."

"That'll do; go on with the rehearsal."

THE heroic man who tries to scare a runaway horse into stopping should be chained. He rushes into the middle of the street, flings one arm with a hat on it towards the east, and the other arm with an umbrella attached towards the west, and shouts "Hi, yi, yi, yi!" just as the tired horse is about to stop.

As he rushes back to the pavement, the horse, with a new scare, breaks into a fresh run, swings the cart into a shop-window, starts a few other horses, and everything is to pay.

That evening the man tells his wife that he nearly stopped a runaway horse, but that none of the idle bystanders would help him.

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By E. MILLS.

VI.—THE MAN WHO CAME TO STAY.

Willwanda was a hospitable station, I must say that for it. Jack liked to see the house full, and it was as jolly as a place usually is when it is bossed by young people. There was no stern parent to order "lights out" at ten o'clock, just when we were beginning to enjoy ourselves; no old people who had forgotten their youth so far as to wonder what delight frivolous young ones could find in wandering about a moonlit garden, sweet with the scent of starry jasmine and heliotrope, regardless of probable snakes and probable chills; and yet a stern head of the house would have been very useful in the case of the "man who came to stay."

It was the day before the show, which triennially cast the little bush town, twenty miles from Willwanda, into a whirlpool of excitement. Our house was near the high road, and people had been coming in all day to break their journey, and lunch *en route* from stations up the river to the town, and my pretty Sydney friend and I had a merry time presiding over the lunch. Susie, my school-girl sister, had a good time also, for there were several of her own young friends amongst the travellers, although she declared we made her wait on all the old fogies, and sent her out to the pantry a hundred and seventy-four times for fresh cups; but Susie was always prone to exaggeration.

Amongst a party of men we knew came one we did not. However, he was evidently a friend of theirs, and we welcomed him accordingly, although he was not a nice young man, being grimy about the necktie and hands, with a soft, foolish face, small, cunning brown eyes, and hair that wanted cutting. We told Susie to look after him, and returned to our own end of the table. We were having a merry time trying to keep to our rule of not engaging ourselves beforehand for dances at the show ball.

However, I found time to ask Jack who the stranger was. He said he had not caught his name, but fancied "someone had said that he was a fellow who had been staying at Rushy Creek," a station beyond the ranges belonging to our oldest and dearest friends, which in itself was introduction enough in the bush, and one more to our "lunch" would not matter. "I will ask Ray," he added; "I believe he came with him." But a few moments afterwards I saw that Jack and Ray Smith were deep in the causes of the fall in the price of wool, and knew that the all-engrossing subject would drive all other thoughts from my brother's head.

And it really did not matter, as the man of the grimy collar would pass out of our ken, probably for ever, in the course of the afternoon. I happened to be near him soon afterwards, and heard Susie ask him his name.

"Johnnie King," he answered with a leer which was meant to be fascinating. "Most people call me plain Johnnie; you can if you like."

"Thank you," said Susie, "but I would much rather call you 'Mr. King.'"

However, this snub did not affect the young man at all. He listened to every word we said, and laughed loudly at all our local jokes, and once, when my pretty friend made a bright answer to some chaffing question from one of our neighbours, "Mr. King" thumped on the table until the glasses rang again, and shouted, "Good for you, old girl." I wondered then that no one in particular crushed him: perhaps his "introducer" was too ashamed of his *protégé* to "own up." The riders rose to go soon afterwards. We liked them all, but felt relieved, thinking we had seen the last of the creature who wandered over to the stable-yard without having even the decency to say "Good-bye."

By four o'clock the last visitor had departed, and we girls stood at the gate talking over the day's events, and watching the specks of dust on the high road, which betokened selectors and travellers still show-ward bound.

"I like the Smiths," I said; "but I hope they won't bring their new friend near me again if he is their friend."

"No," said Alice, my pretty friend, "it is indeed to be hoped they won't bring him to the ball. I am sure he would be difficult to get rid of."

"They won't bring him," announced Susie, who was hanging to the cross-piece of the trellis by her hands, practising lifting her own weight, "they won't bring him, for he means to escort you himself. Don't faint or scream, girls, but just look up the path behind you!"

We turned simultaneously, and saw the creature

strolling towards us, his hands in his pocket, and a "monarch-of-all-I-survey" air about him. He had not gone after all!

Was it possible that Jack had asked him to stay? My soul rose in wrath at the thought.

"Nice evenin', ladies," he said, "and a nice place you've got here." Then, leaning familiarly on the gate, he added: "I reckon a fellow could do worse than put in a week or so on the stations about here. You couldn't live cheaper, for one thing!"

His last remark did not seem to call for an answer, and for a time nothing was to be heard but the cooing of scrub-doves in the undisturbed wilderness of the lower garden. Then Susie having accomplished the requisite number of up liftings without letting go, tumbled to the ground—a heap of brown holland pinafore, tumbled masses of red-brown hair, and liberal show of slim, black-stockinged legs. Fixing her bright grey eyes on the creature, she said:

"Are you going to the show, Mr. King? It's best to get into town the night before, you know!"

"Oh, yes, I'll give it a look in the morning," he said nonchalantly. "I've just been talking to your housemaid (as nice a bit of muslin as I ever set eyes on), and she tells me the end room is where you usually put bachelors, so I just slung my swag there."

"Indeed," I began freezingly, then remembering that perhaps this peculiar young man was a long-expected cattle buyer, to whom it behoved us to be civil, I softened my voice a little and said that "my brother was at the stable, and perhaps Mr. King would like to look at the horses."

"No thanks; I'm a slight better off where I am, I reckon—I don't get young ladies' company every day," and he edged a little nearer to my pretty friend, who crimsoned with anger and looked helplessly at Susie.

"Then you had better go inside," said that damsel politely; "there are plenty of papers on the hall table. We always have an hour's sleep before tea. Come along, girls!" and seizing an arm of each, she whirled us off to the house.

My young sister's powers of invention always staggered me.

"Really, Susie," I said, "you should not tell such stories, even if the man is horrid, and he may be the buyer from Rushy Creek to look at our stud cattle!"

"Stories!" said Susie scornfully. "I'm going to be an authoress, so it's all right. As for the man being a cattle-buyer, fiddle-sticks! He looks too stupid to know a shorthorn from an Alderney. He's just horrid and nothing else."

And he was "horrid."

On the strength of knowing our friends, Jack did not like to give him the cold shoulder. My big brother was decidedly too easy-going on some points, and I, like him, had an almost morbid dread of hurting people's feelings. Susie alone was hard-hearted and decisive, and took the lead in most things, despite our united efforts to keep her within proper bounds.

Jack was busy, too, settling things for the show, which would last for three days. He was on the committee, and would have to stay in town a night after it was over, returning next day to Willwanda to pay off a large camp of ring-barkers. The contractor had asked him to bring a certain sum in notes or gold. It was contrary to the usual custom, of course, but Jack was always good-natured; he was to get the money in town, and send it out by me to Mr. Kenrick, our old book-keeper, who always slept in the house when Jack was away.

I was packing my dress basket on the dining-room table, and receiving instructions re the money from my brother, when we were annoyed to find that Mr. King had strolled in from the garden, and was openly listening—his foolish face set in an uninterested stare. He made some facetious remarks about my ball dress, asking me if it was "toole" or "crêpon," and then strolled out again, after helping himself to the whisky and soda on the sideboard.

"Really, Jack," I said, "his manners are awful."

"Granted, sis; but he goes to-day, and we must make the best of any friends of the Ropers. He's got a fair cheek staying a night without an invitation. Hurry up the girls—the four-in-hand will be along directly."

It was a lovely morning. Jack tooled the four greys along merrily, and the two jackaroos in the back seat with Susie kept us alive with their remarks. Mr. King and several of the station hands caught us up at the first gate, and Jack noticed that he was riding a Rushy Creek horse, for he knew the brand; and in answer to a question, Mr. King remarked that he had paid a long price for him, which was likely, for the horse was one of the famous Warrior breed, and was probably as good as he looked.

The owner had apparently made great strides in our acquaintance, for he called Susie by her Christian name, and spoke of the good time we should all have at the ball. We certainly did not mean to let him trouble us in town. But, alas! when a man is as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros, and cannot even see a snub, it is hard work to get rid of him. Our crumpled rose leaf, our "fly in the amber," was still Mr. King. He followed us everywhere. He took real delight in playing third. He turned up to all our snug little lunches amongst the long grass and bluebells in the showground paddock—he rose serene above our attempts to snub and ignore him.

He waited for us at the door of the ballroom, still attired in the grimy collar and unshapely necktie. As he had left his luggage—a tiny strapped valise—locked in his room at Willwanda, this was not to be wondered at, but that was a fact we were not aware of then. He did not stay at our hotel, and we congratulated ourselves upon the fact until we found he had been quartering himself upon our friends in town, introducing himself as a friend of ours, until Susie made a house-to-house visitation, and gave him away; but as this did not transpire until the last day of the show, the creature had still got the best of us. We cut him dead after that.

As I said before, Jack was obliged to stay in town the day after the show, and one of the jackaroos drove the trap out at sunrise through the sleeping town. As usual, the last night had been a wild one amongst the men folk of all degrees, and the main street looked strange indeed, strewn with upturned forms, gates off their hinges, blankets, pillows, and sticks of hotel furniture, for there had been a grand pulling out of bed of all the quieter and sleep-loving portion of the masculine community.

My pretty friend gave her opinions freely upon the subject, and I backed her up. We were girls and could not see wherein lay the exquisite joy of losing a night's rest, drinking more vile bush hotel concoctions than were needed or wished for, and smashing a lot of furniture that had to be paid for at double its original value next morning.

I cannot say whether the Willwanda jackaroos were with the attacking or defending party. At any rate,

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"Hallo! girls; so we're all home again."

they agreed with all we said, but, as Susie said afterwards, "they looked really too innocent to be quite guiltless."

One youth especially, who had been reared in the rigid moral atmosphere of his Low Church parson father's home, was loud in his denunciations of such "silly practices." He had curly yellow hair, an English complexion, sea-blue eyes, and a handsome, straight-featured face, but I am afraid he was not as good as he looked. Indeed, I have heard Jack say he was at the bottom of all the tricks and pranks at the quarters.

We felt a little tired and distrait after so much unusual dissipation; sorry enough to leave the little town in its holiday mood, but glad, glad, indeed, to think we had seen the last of the objectionable Johnnie King. The two boys had to be in the saddle again after lunch, having orders to take to the ring-barkers, and would be camped out that night. For once I thought girls had the best of it, as we straggled up to the house on feet that ached with three night's continuous dancing.

How cool and fresh the old creepered place looked, how invitingly my string hammock swung amongst the tweediana and grape leaves. And then my thoughts received a sudden shock. The hammock was not empty! I knew the soles of those gigantic bluchers and the old felt hat that rested amongst the cushions of Liberty silk, which had been brought from the drawing-room as coolly as if they belonged to the creature, for there he was luxuriating amongst the vines.

"Look, girls!" I gasped. They stopped in unfeigned horror. Then Susie looked at the sky, which was clouding over ominously:

"It will rain," she said, "and he will be flooded up here for weeks."

"Hallo! girls, so we're all home again. I fancy I started a bit ahead of the trap," was his cheerful greeting. But, in offended silence, we all three turned our backs and marched into the house.

Susie left us with a determined look on her face, and went out of a side-door in the direction of the creature's room.

"Oh, Alice," I cried, "if only Jack had come home! He would be determined now, I know."

"My dear, it will rain cats and dogs, and he will have such a good excuse to stay, especially if the creeks come down," was all the comfort Alice could give me.

I picked up my little handbag and called the housemaid. "Tell Mr. Kenrick to come here, Jane, and bring a tray laid for three into my room at lunch time. Mr. King will have his in the dining-room."

A few moments afterwards Mr. Kenrick came in, and I gave him the notes from the bank. He was sleeping in Jack's room.

"If you put it in Jack's little safe, I think it will be all right," I said, "but it is a large sum of money. Thank goodness we are in the bush and need not fear thieves. I wish Jack had used his cheque-book altogether, however."

"Do look at Susie," cried Alice, who was standing listlessly by the window. I stared helplessly at a vision of Susie flying through the rain towards the stables.

"She is becoming very unruly," I said. "Jack really ought to send her to a boarding school."

She was back again in a few minutes, soaked to the skin, of course, for the rain was now falling in torrents.

"Where have you been, Susie?" said the creature in the hammock, rather sharply for him I thought.

"Only to give Jack's orders to the men," she answered.

"What orders, I'd like to know?"

"And so you may," said Susie, "for it isn't a secret. Just on no account to leave the station. The threatening rain made him alter his mind about them, you know. All hands were to go out and help shift camp."

"And what the devil do you mean by alterin' them orders? A brat like you," began the creature, his voice shaking with anger. Things were certainly taking a strange turn. I called Susie away at once, and while she changed her clothes gave her a scolding for talking to Mr. King.

"The man is evidently not in a fit state to talk to women at all," I said. "No doubt he has been at the whisky again, and Jack has no right to send orders by you. I can't understand him; he sent no message to Mr. Kenrick."

"Well, I saw him last," said Susie, "and I know what I am doing. You will be awfully sorry you scolded me before another sun goes down."

She wore an injured and important air, and tore off again directly I released her, nearly knocking down poor, feeble old Mr. Kenrick in her precipitant flight.

"She was carrying something under her cloak when she went to the stable the first time," said Alice, "and I believe it was Mr. King's valise. She may have some plan for getting rid of him. My dear, do you really think he is tipsy? I am so terrified of men like that. Come and look at him." I joined her at the window, which commanded a view of the hammock. "I wish Mr. Kenrick wasn't so old," I remarked. "He was here in father's time, and Jack likes to keep him on. It would kill the old fellow if we put anyone in his place; and his heart is weak too, so we never tell him anything worrying."

"Thank goodness Susie has stopped the men going out," said Alice. "I vote we send for the boys to come over. Mr. King looks so horrid."

And so he did. Lying moodily in the hammock,

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buttoning and unbuttoning his coat, his coarse, stupid face strangely transformed with temper, for Susie had evidently put him out. he certainly did not look very nice. "Perhaps he knows we won't lunch with him," I suggested.

Above the hammock the ancient vines had straggled in until their thick, interlacing branches had made a sort of double roof. Jack was always declaring he would have it cut down, for it was gradually displacing the rafters, but Susie had begged it off—for she had an ingenious method of clambering up the roof, and slipping in under the eaves, and into the natural hammock made by the vines. Lat erly she had been growing too big to get in easily, and so our astonishment can be imag ned when from our vantage window we saw a strange thing happen. Mr King had unbuttoned his coat again, and was fingering something evidently hidden in his vest, when from out the leafy screen above his head a hand and arm darted, and quick as lightning seized the hidden object, whatever it was, and disappeared again into the vines. With a string of highly original curses, Mr. King tumbled out of the hammock on to the floor. He looked very scared and astonished, as well he might. Alice threw open the window and screamed: "Susie! Susie!"

She dropped lightly to the ground and covered him with her revolver.

"It's all right," answered that damsel's vo ce; "just tell Mr. King what a good shot I am w th a revolver, girls. You know Ben taught me last holidays, and if he moves an inch I'm going to shoot at once. I can take a splendid steady aim from this bough."

Mr. King seemed to turn green before our eyes. He made a movement towards his room, but an ominous click from the screen above brought him to a stan still. I could see Susie's white dress and determin d little face and the glint of the weapon quite pla nly now.

"It's no use; I've got the axe and the other pistol-thing out of your room. I climbed in by the skylight, so you needn't go there," continued Susie. "If I fire once, the men will come over in a body, but I'm going to give you a chance. The black boy is bringing round your horse now, valise and all, and if you are sensible you will go before Jack is out with the police, for I sent word to him directly I got home."

I really felt almost sorry for the man, he looked so deadly frightened.

The loud voices had brought poor old Kenrick, white and shaking, to the scene, and the cook and housemaid were peering fearfully from the hall door. The small black boy rode up just then on Mr. King's horse, ready saddled for the journey.

"Now," said Susie, "go!"

And as he turned to obey her orders, she dropped lightly to the ground and covered him with the revolver. I never saw a man get on to a horse as quickly as that one did. He seemed more upset than even the strange circumstances warranted. Alice was sobbing in a frightened sort of way by the window, for she was unnerved and frightened. Mr. King dug his spurs into his horse, and made for the road which led to the river.

"Oh, shout for the men," I cried; "he may come back again. Oh, Susie, what does it all mean?"

Susie's little face was white enough as she answered:

"There isn't a man in the place but little Bundle and Mr. Kenrick. They had gone when I got to the stable; but I didn't want him to know. I don't think he will come back."

Her voice shook, and I took her in my arms.

"But how did you know? Why was he so frightened?" cried Alice.

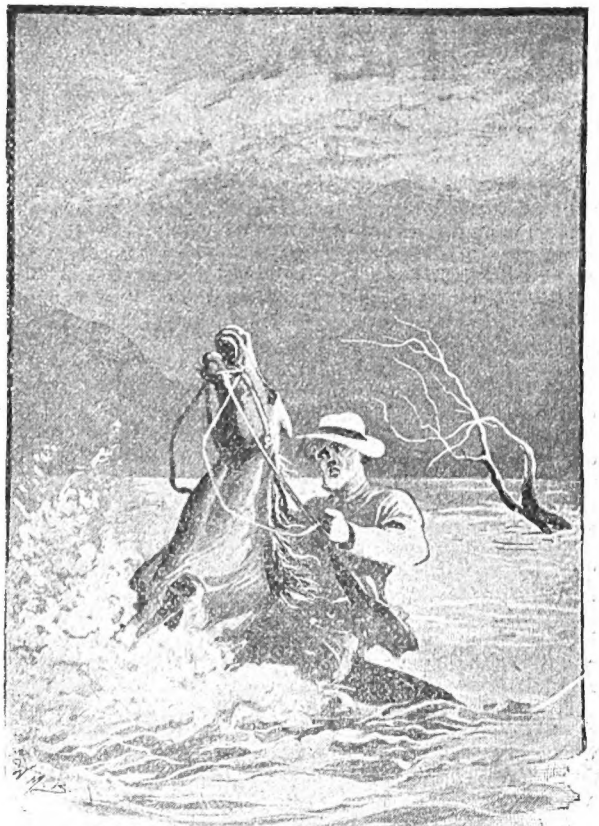
"I told Bundle to bring his horse round," said Susie. "because I know he is hiding from something. I climbed into his room. You didn't know, I suppose, that he locked it again after he came home and took the key. Well, I got over the skylight and packed up his things, so that he should have no excuse to stay, and just accidentally I knocked the pillow down and saw the edge of our new axe sticking out from under the mattress. Then I found a loaded pistol-thing in his valise and I just skipped with them both. When he got into such a rage about the men not being gone (although they really were) I knew he must mean mischief. Probably he wanted the money you brought out, and he planned to get it to-night. Anyway, I knew we couldn't do anything until we got his revolver. I saw the end of it when I first spoke to him. He kept it always in his coat, and so I got it." And then, womanlike, Susie began to cry.

"Oh! you darling," I said, "I am so sorry I scolded you."

"I tol—told you s—so," wept Susie.

* * * * *

And, indeed, Susie had saved us from a great danger Jack arrived unexpectedly that afternoon with the police



The horse had absolutely refused to swim.

for word had been brought that "Charlie Cussen," a Rushy Creek stockman, who had murdered his mate, was at large, and although he had cleverly led the police on a wild-goose chase in an opposite direction, had gone back on his tracks and made down Willwanda way. He had been disappointed in the gold he had hoped to find on his victim, and had evidently intended getting over the border the day after he had come to our station. But overhearing our conversation about the ring-barker's money, his plans had changed; and if Susie had not been as sharp as she was athletic, things might have gone very badly with us. Poor old Kenrick, at any rate, would have been a dead man.

The murderer was a strange mixture of clumsiness, cunning, cheek, and cowardice, and we could hardly realise that the thick-skinned bore was really so dangerous a character. At any rate, his career was a short one, as the stolen Warrior colt was not a perfect horse for a man with his life in his hands; for when, hard pressed by the police, Cussen had put him at a flooded creek, the horse had absolutely refused to swim, and had been carried down with his rider to certain death at the old Willwanda crossing.

One comes across strange characters in the far bush; but the most unpleasant memory I have of anyone is that connected with "The Man who Came to Stay."

"Papa, if you hadn't married mamma——"

"Well?"

"What a lot o' fun me an' you could have—a-doin' as we please!"

Resident: "Thinking of commencing business, eh? Seems to me you're rather young for a family physician."

Young Doctor: "Yes, but—er—I shall only doctor children at first."

Maud: "I thought you did not believe in the theory of kissing?"

Marie: "I don't, as a theory. But there is a big difference between theory and practice."

Mutual Friend: "Madam, allow me to present my friend, Mr. Green."

"Excuse me, my name is Brown!"

Mutual Friend: "That makes no difference. Madam is aware that I'm colour blind."

"Papa, I know what makes some people laugh in their sleeves," said little Harry.

"Well, my son, what makes them?" asked the father.

"'Cause that's where their funny bone is," was the reply.

"The loom of Nature has woven another web!"—these were the words in which a sentimental schoolteacher named Webb published the fact that his wife had got a little boy. A man named Snow beat this, when he sent to the paper the announcement that "A little Snow drifted into my house last night."

Pastor: "You know, William, what a deal you have to be thankful for; you are blessed with health and strength, plenty of good things to eat, warm clothes, and a comfortable house to live in."

Blithesome Peasant: "Werry true, sir; but do you know sometimes I can't help thinkin' as 'ow I 'as it all took out ag'in in corns!"

They had had a tiff, and he was anxious to clear away the tram lines at the corners of her mouth.

"I see that dresses are to be worn longer than usual next season," he observed, glancing carelessly up from the pages of his morning paper.

"Well, if they are to be worn longer than I am compelled to wear mine they'll have to be made of sheet-iron," she replied, with a look that, he afterwards confided to a friend, fairly scorched him.

An old Scotch sexton possessed a guinea at a time when such coins were rare in Highland parishes. He used to exhibit the treasure as a curiosity on Sundays after the service, charging a "bawbee" for a peep. Hard times came, however, and the sexton was forced to spend the cherished coin. The next Sunday applicants came as usual to view it—but in vain. Suddenly a bright idea struck the old man.

"Here, lads!" he cried, "ye canna see the guinea, but ye shall see the purse that held it for a pinch of sneeshin."

An "Extra Turn."

In addition to the usual number of "artistes" nightly to be seen at the Pantheon Music-Hall, Whitechapel, the audience were accustomed to an "extra turn" appearing upon the stage now and then.

The "extra turn" at the Pantheon was mostly an aspirant to music-hall fame, and the audience generally expected that the latter would prove a failure.

This time their expectations were fully realised, for Mary Saunders—or Marie St. Clair as she called herself—certainly had proved one.

True she had not been given a very great chance of success.

In the first place, as she was in the middle of "making up," the call boy had appeared, and told her she was to follow the overture. The band was then just on the point of finishing up the overture, and she had barely time to put on her dress and fly down the stairs on to the stage. So that while one eye looked large, dark and langorous—with grease paint and indian ink—the other looked small and light—giving her the appearance of a lady charging her husband with assault at Bow Street.

Then again, she might perhaps have done a little better, if the workmen—who, were busily preparing the back of the stage for the "Sketch," had not made so much noise while she was singing. But, what with stage manager to right of her, limelight men to left of her, and scene shifters behind her—all volleying and thundering at one another—her girlish tones had but little opportunity of making themselves heard. Still, even these drawbacks could not do away with the fact that she was a failure.

The "descriptive" singer, who was watching her from the "wings"—and whose "descriptive" idea of herself was that she was England's unique and most valuable specimen of her kind—had said so and she ought to know.

She, the "extra turn," had seen Marie St. Cyr, the "star artiste" she so greatly admired—and whose name she had carefully copied—walk on to the stage, and bow repeatedly—in acknowledgement, of course, of loud cheers and applause. So she also—although without any provocation—walked down to the footlights, and bowed right and left a great many times. Several of the "gentleman" in the auditorium, evidently impressed by so much politeness, rose from their seats and bowed too.

She now commenced her song—quite oblivious of the fact that the band was still playing the symphony. The band at the Pantheon was not one of the best, and the musicians did not consider it necessary to spoil the effect of their own playing by hurrying up the symphony to catch up with the singing of an "extra turn," but endeavoured to drown the discord by a still more liberal use of trumpet and drum. And so, while they played merrily on in their own sweet way, she sang steadily on in hers. At the end of each verse she again bowed repeatedly, but now with more excuse, for the noise the people were making was deafening. The bowing especially seemed to take their fancy, for by this time the whole house rose as one man, and returned her salute. The fever of success was in her blood and she sang with an abandonment worthy of a better cause. Now she smiled coyly at her audience, now she winked archly at them, or shook her finger playfully at them—as she fancied the action of the song called for. And at last, with a great flourish of skirts, she finished up with the words, "So now you know the sort of girl I am"—the only words of the song, by the way, that the audience had heard at all—and bounded triumphantly off the stage to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and derisive shouts of "encore."

And then, the loud voiced "descriptive" lady marched down to the footlights, and the hearts of the roughs were moved to pity and many of them shed tears as, with much gesticulation, she told of the sorrows of the life of a "Pore orphan girl."

Perhaps they would not have laughed so loudly at the "extra turn" had they known her history—alas! it was only too common a one.

She had lost her mother six months ago, and had been left, with a little sister and brother, to take up the burden of making "both ends meet" that that tired mother had laid down.

At first Mary had thought of trying to get the little ones into an orphanage; but they were all she had left in the world, and had begged so hard not to be sent away from her, that she could not find it in her heart to part with them.

And so they had struggled on—living in one little room and existing on the pittance she earned at the factory. It was merely existing—the children counting themselves lucky when they could get as much bread and dripping as they wanted—but they had one another, and a small sum put by for a rainy day, and if the little mother sometimes went hungry to bed, her heart was full of love—and so she was happy.

Her idea of going on the stage came about in a very natural manner.

Her landlady, Mrs. Brown, kept a small green grocery shop, and exhibited bills of the Pantheon Music Hall on the wall outside.

In return for this, she often received orders and, on one or two occasions, had taken Mary with her to the Music Hall and, in glowing terms, had told her of the large salaries paid to the performers.

It all looked so simple and easy, and so little study seemed necessary, that finally Mary resolved to try her own luck—feeling convinced that she too could make a success.

She did not know that success meant the swagger and strut, the brazen advertisement that money alone could purchase; that "the race was to the swift, the battle to the strong;" that in that fierce combat all that was tender and pure and simple in life was as nothing.

No, she did not know these things—how should she? She felt that she had only to do her best, and she too would be given a chance—would be allowed to make her own little bid for fame and fortune.

She drew some money from the slender store entrusted

to her by her mother, and bought a song. She also took lessons in dancing, every evening after the day's work was over.

Then, a little more of the money had to go for some satin dancing slippers, and lace petticoats; and the tired child would sit up far into the night, working at a wonderful blue silk dress—and building her castles in the air.

What a labour of love it had been to make those infinitesimal little tucks, and to trim each with row upon row of lace; and how real an affection she felt for that shining robe—the fairy god-mother that was to transform her into a beautiful princess!

One day, when all was ready, she arrayed herself in this glistening garment, and with Cissie and Joey, and Mrs. Brown for an audience, went through her performance.

Cissie and Joey, had clapped their small hands with glee: and Mrs. Brown had predicted a great future for her.

Her preparations being now completed she went to see an agent, a Mr. Davis.

"You'll do all right, my dear," he had said in cheerful tones, after hearing her sing. "But you must get a couple more songs. You can't expect to get on to the stage with one song, and a song and dance." She had thought long and seriously before taking the last two pounds. Cissie's cough was very bad, she ought to see a doctor! And Joey wanted a pair of boots.

Ah, well! she would be able to make it up to those dear ones, tenfold, bye-and-bye. The agent's manner had been so reassuring, and she felt so confident of success.

And at last came one never-to-be-forgotten day—surely the happiest day she had ever known!—when Mr. Davis told her she was to appear at the Pantheon, as an "extra turn," on the following Monday evening, adding, "The manager is a great friend of mine, and I'll get him to keep you on for the rest of the week."

So she gave up her work at the factory,

"Ah! You'd soon be earning your twenty pounds a week," said Mrs. Brown, when Mary told her of her good fortune, "and then you'll be too grand to speak to the likes of such a shabby creature as me."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Brown," she answered, her face beaming with happiness, "I could never be too grand to speak to you," and in the excess of her joy, noticing that Mrs. Brown's dress really was very shabby, she gave her the black dress she had been in the habit of wearing when at work.

She was in the dressing-room, removing her "make up" when the manager came round to speak to her.

"Where's that Miss What's-her-name, the 'extra turn'?" said that gentleman—as without undue ceremony he popped his head in the door.

"Do you want me?" Mary answered timidly—although not without a slight look of pleasurable expectation.

"Want you? I want to know what you mean by making such an exhibition on my stage."

The pleased look faded from her face even sooner than it came.

"Wasn't it all right?" she faltered, with a curious little droop of her sensitive lower lip.

"All right? You must be mad if you don't know what a fool you've made of yourself. I shall write to Davis in the morning and ask him what he means by sending me such 'turns.'"

She did not answer but looked up at him with large, wondering eyes. The words had fallen upon her ears, although the meaning of them had not yet penetrated to her inner consciousness.

And then the truth dawned upon her—she had made an exhibition of herself. The shouts of the people had not been cheers; they had been jeering at her.

And yet she looked very young and fair—too young to fight the battle of life unaided; too fair for one so lonely and unprotected!

Standing there, in her tawdry raiment, she gave one the idea of a little girl, dutifully attending some Christmas pantomime and too young to understand it.

"Have you ever 'worked,' anywhere before?" asked one of the artists, looking at her curiously.

"No," she answered gravely, "this is my first appearance."

"And she can bet her life it'll be her last," laughed another.

"That song of yours 'went well,'" said a third.

"Ah! don't be unkind," now put in a stout, good-natured looking lady, who played the part of the heroine in the 'Sketch." "Only think! praps the poor girl's been looking forward to being a success."

Mary paid no heed to the jests of the others, but went on wiping away the rouge from the childish whiteness of her skin.

The kindly remark of the stout lady had touched her deeply—had shown her the pathos of her position more plainly than she could have seen it herself.

In the distance the voice of the descriptive singer, dirging out its monotonous song, sounded like the chorus of her own despair—a wail for "days that are over, dreams that are done"

She took off the blue dress—that dress over whose silken folds she had dreamed her dreams of fame—smoothed out the frills of lace, and folded it tenderly. She took off the little satin slippers, and the white lace petticoats, and placed them carefully, by the side of the dress, in the basket; and ere she closed the lid, she gave them one last, loving look, as a mother might who shuts from her sight the little woollen shoe, or the soft baby gown, that to her are too human, and breathe of hopes that are passed, heartache that is ever present, and the future that might have been.

Her basket was placed on a cab and she was driven back—back to the old bare attic, and the old hard life.

The cab rattled down the narrow street, and stopped in front of the dingy shop. The night was bleak and foggy, and as Mary alighted, she felt that the outlook of her own life was of the same dull, cheerless grey.

She mechanically gave the cabman a shilling—the last in the shabby purse—then she went in.

The lamp in the passage was turned down, and a strong smell of cheap paraffin pervaded the house. She gathered up her basket in both arms, and groped her way up the dark stairs, to her own little room under the tiles.

Cissie, who had been waiting—all excitement to hear the news—ran to meet her and twined her arms lovingly round her neck

"Do tell me all about it, Mary. Did you look very lovely, and were the people—— Why, you're crying!"

Mary pressed her sister closer to her, and kissed the little eager face, but she only said, in a dull voice:

"Ask Mrs. Brown if she'll give me back my old dress. I must go down to the factory in the morning, and see if I can get taken on again."

C. C.

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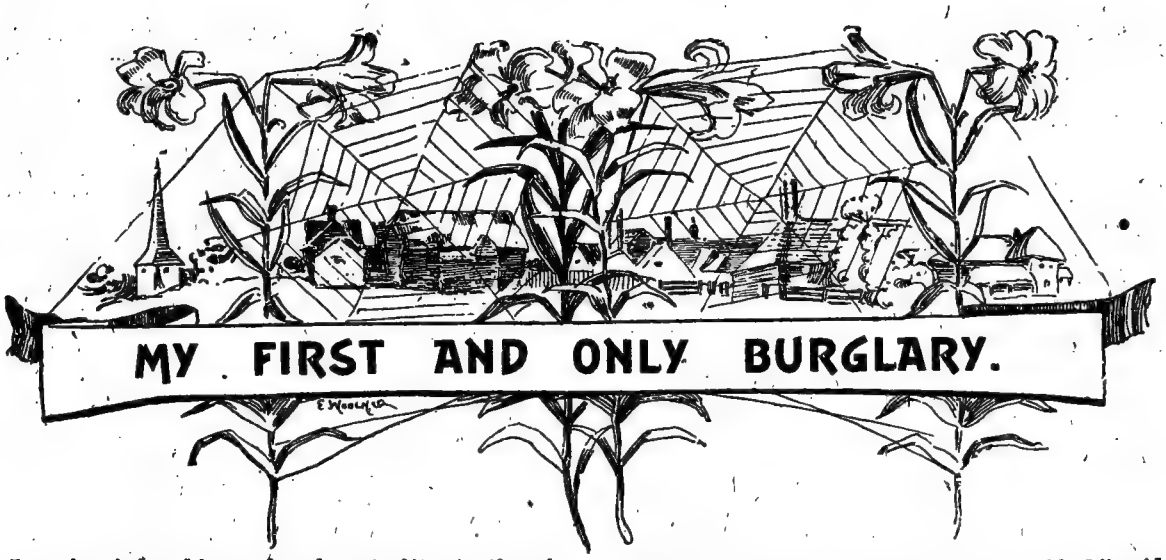

MY FIRST AND ONLY BURGLARY.

I DON'T mind making a clean breast of it now, though it was matter of strict silence with me for a long time; and the few friends who were acquainted with the facts maintained a considerate secrecy.

It grew out of what that vulgar Simpkins calls a "barney," at the Club. Doubleday, Wilson, Saunders and I were chatting over our cigars, and the conversation turned on burglaries; for it was the burglary season and the papers had recently teemed with tales of housebreaking. So far, the suburb in which the four of us resided had not been visited by any gang of thieves. But, then, as Doubleday said, "You never know when they might swoop down," and as Watson pessimistically suggested, "As they've left us alone so far, our turn will probably come before long."

Both of them stated that they had taken the precaution of investing in insurance policies against loss by burglary, and evidently prided themselves on their foresight. Saunders pooh-pooh'd the danger, and declared that he felt quite safe, for he was sure no one could effect an entrance into his house without disturbing himself or servants—even if old Pluto didn't make a meal of him first.

For my part, being single and in diggings, I might be supposed to have no practical interest in the subject. But I was a prospective householder—Maud's mother having at last yielded a tardy consent to our union in the not far distant future—and I was keen on all matters pertaining to domestic management. Indeed I seemed to be the keenest of the four, and even ventured to take Saunders to task for his reprehensible carelessness. As he rose to depart, he laughingly said:

"Well, when I'm visited in the night watches I'll send for you fellows—specially for you, Snaggles—to help to capture the thieves."

It was then that a brilliant idea struck me, the working out of which might, I thought, demonstrate to Saunders his unwisdom, and teach him a lesson in prudence.

"It would serve him right," I exclaimed, "if burglars did pay him a visit. Tell you what, let's do it! Get into his house and walk off with some of his valuables. Send 'em back afterwards—with a penitent letter from the supposed thief, you know."

Both Doubleday and Watson admitted the brilliancy of the idea, but fought shy of participation in the carrying out of it.

"Jolly well we should look if we were nabbed," said the former, "you don't catch me going in for any giddy goatish tricks of that sort. Burglary's a serious business, and even if we squared the police, if caught, we should be the laughing stock of the neighbourhood. I'm not on, old man."

Watson said it was a good notion of a joke—for a single man. In fact he wouldn't mind taking a hand in it if he were younger, but it was a bit too skittish for the father of a family. The "family," by the way, consists of one excessively small and red and squally infant—a very recent arrival. To hear him talk since its birth you'd think he had a dozen at least. The attractiveness of my idea grew on me, until I was fully persuaded that it was almost a duty to demonstrate to Saunders how easily he might become the prey of thieves.

"Don't know what it might save him from in the future, you know," I urged.

"Something in that," admitted Watson. "You play a lone hand in it, old chap, and get all the kudos."

"Bet he won't do it," sneered Doubleday.

Now if there's anything I hate it is to be suspected of lack of pluck or determination, and I replied hotly, "Bet you I do. I'll do it tomorrow night. What'll you have on it."

And, to make a long story short, I there and then undertook to break into the dwelling-house of our friend Saunders, and remove therefrom goods and chattels, to the shaking of his sense of security, Doubleday and Watson swearing the utmost secrecy.

I had often smiled at the want of caution and intelligence displayed in the clumsy methods of burglars in such stories of their doings as I had read, and determined to do my "little job" in style, and in a way to baffle discovery of the perpetrator. I therefore went to considerable pains to procure the necessary outfit, chuckling over Saunders' discomfiture to come.

The fateful night arrived, rather windy and very dark, just suited to my purpose, and shortly after midnight I stole forth on my quest. I had procured a suit of clothes in keeping with my errand, in order to avoid recognition in the unlikely event of being seen. For the same reason I took along a supply of burnt cork wherewith to smear my face before entering the house. Not that I had much fear of being unable to escape if disturbed at my "job," but I didn't particularly want to

be recognised by anyone who might catch a glimpse of me.

Knowing Saunder' house and grounds as well as I did, it was with ease that I found my way round to the back of the premises. and selected a likely window. Meanwhile, I paid a visit to Pluto's kennel, thinking it would be an easy matter to settle the old dog, who knew me well. I had always regarded him as an intelligent animal, but it is astonishing what a fool a dog is in the dark.

He made a good deal of noise before he was assured of the identity of his present visitor with one of his reputable acquaintances.

Waiting awhile, lest Pluto's barking should have aroused the inmates—though trusting they would lay it to the account of prowling cats—at length I approached the selected window. feeling a good deal more nervous than I had bargained for.

There was no difficulty in forcing back the catch. "Careless beggar, Saunders," thought I, "not to even have the shutters closed." Once inside the house I became less and less in love with my task. The risk of discovery and the unpleasantness of it became more apparent. I found myself starting at the slightest noise that I made, and thinking how excessively foolish I should look if I were detected. However, the wager was on, and I was not going to back out.

Sneaking along the passage to Saunders' snuggery, where I knew he kept his swell collection of medals and coins, I found the cabinet unlocked. "The Juggins," I said to myself—though I should not have liked to be compelled to break open the doors—"why it's putting a premium on a moderate burglar's enterprise," and I annexed the lot.

A visit to the dining-room enabled me to add a "pot" or two, on the possession of which the owner rather prided himself—they being rewards of athletic prowess in his younger and slimmer days.

I didn't want a lot of goods, on account of the difficulty of porterage, but I took care to leave cupboard doors open, drawers pulled out, and things generally in a state of confusion.

Then I decamped, chuckling over my success in so easily winning the bet, and at the same time taking a rise out of Saunders. How taken back he would be in the morning, I thought.

Leaving the window open, as another sign of a burglar's visit, I slipped across the yard and down the shrubbery path to a point at which it was possible to drop over the wall into a side lane. Balancing myself a moment on the top of the wall, I dropped, and was received in the arms of someone who gruffly exclaimed, "Ah, got ye, have I? Better come quietly now."

To say that I was surprised is a very mild putting of my astonishment, and to declare that I was alarmed is to keep well within the truth.

But I had not played three-quarters at "Rugger" for nothing, and, dropping the bag that contained my "swag," and throwing up my arms and slipping suddenly downwards on to my knees. I was out of the policeman's grasp and had rolled over and was up and off before he realised what had happened.

I felt pretty sure of holding my own in running, and sprinted off down the lane.

But alas! The man blew a note on his whistle, and just as I turned a bend, I heard hurrying footsteps in advance, and ran full tilt into the arms of a second constable, who speedily convinced me that he knew the art of collaring only too well,

"No use yer strugglin'," panted he, and he was right.

Hurrying to his assistance, my first assailant grasped my collar, and I was helplessly "held."

Here was a pretty predicament! And as I argued and pleaded with the too watchful guardians of property, I realised with a sickening sense of horror how weak and unconvincing my presentments were. An attempt to get off at the cost of a fiver to each of my captors was met with indignant refusal.

"Note as 'e've attempted to bribe the police, Brown," growled No. 1, "that'll mean a hextry three months, that will."

In vain I assured them that I was a respectable person. "Yes, you look like it," sneered the one named Brown.

I fervently, but fruitlessly, declared that it was a joke, and done for a wager.

"Oh, yes," said No. 1. sardonically, "you'll find it a joke before you've done your time, I'll wager." And the brute laughed at his exceedingly poor joke. A more unbelieving, dense, and unfeeling couple of persons I never met, they were so utterly proof against all appeals to their intelligence and better feeling "You tell all that to his worship to-morrow morning," growled Brown.

By this time the extreme awkwardness of my position was painfully clear to me. Suppose—as seemed certain—these ruffians should insist on locking me up! And if the magistrate should be as hard of belief as these minions of the law! If Doubleday and Watson should decline to back me up, in order to keep out of the mess! For men are capable of anything. It was plain that I was in a very ugly fix. How devoutly I wished that I had left the miserable business alone! A burglary in joke is one thing in contemplation in the smoke room of a club, and quite another thing when in the grasp of two determined and incorruptible constables. How I reviled my folly.

"Better get 'im along, Brown," on the part of No. 1. almost destroyed all hope. In despair I entreated them to take me to the house which I had just quitted, that Saunders might identify me.

"Anyhow," said the inexorable No. 1. "it's our dooty to run ye in. even if Mr. Saunders should know ye—as is all a bit o' kid in my opinion—and, shouldn't charge ye. Our dooty's plain; we caught ye in the hact."

However, renewing my entreaties, I induced them to yield so far as to take me to Saunders' door. It seemed an intolerable time before any response to Brown's vigorous knocking was forthcoming.

At length a window in the upper story opened, and a head was projected, with a "What's the row?"

"That's the groom," said No. 1, then into the upper air, "There's been a burglary here. We've got 'im. 'E says your gov'ner knows 'im."

A happy thought struck me; it might not be necessary to rouse Saunders at all, if not already roused.

"If that's the groom," I exclaimed, "he will know me." I had little doubt of being able to square the man afterwards, so as to ensure his silence. A light shone through the fan-light and the door was opened. Horrors! The opener was a stranger to me! "Says you'll know 'im." said No. 1. "He's a liar," promptly replied the groom, "and I hopes as you'll believe me. What do she mean by tryin' to take away a clap's character by sayin' as I knows the likes of him. I never set eyes on him afore—strike me dotty if I did. I only come to this place last Toosday. He's none of my pals, he ain't." And all hope from that quarter died

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out at the man's words, while the policemen's grasp tightened on me.

"I thought as much," remarked Brown grimly, "Better get him along to the station."

"Then," pleaded I, "for Heaven's sake, call Mr. Saunders."

"Wants 'is friend Mr. Saunders," sniggered No. 1.

In a few minu es Saunders came.

"Says you know him, sir," explained Brown.

Saunders looked at me fixedly, as I hoarsely said, "For Heaven's sake, Saunders, tell these idiots that you know me. I'll explain to you afterwards. Tell them that I am a friend of yours."

"Can't say that," responded Saunders freezingly. "It's of no use, my man."

Then turning to the policeman, he said, "Gross attempt at deception, officers. He is not known to me. The rascal is evidently trading on some slight likeness to one of my acquaintances. But the voice is different and the complexion is too dark. Besides my friend would never lower himself to housebreaking. Better lock him up. I suppose I shall be wanted at court in the morning? Good night." And I was haled away fuming at Saunders' want of recognition but most of all at my own f lly.

"Anybody else as knows ye 'ereabouts?" inquired No 1 sarcastically. There *was* another—of unimpeachable respectability and rectitude, and for a moment wild thoughts of appeal to her flashed across my mind. The mother of Maude! And I cried, "Yes." But Maude's mother, I remembered, had very strict notions of propriety. Her consent to our marriage had been grudgingly given and would certainly be revoked if she knew of any such escapade on my part as this. Besides, how would Maude feel about it? Her distress would be dreadful.

No, for Maude's sake—dear girl—I would not appeal to Mrs. Grundle. So having said "Yes," I followed it with "No."

"Ho," grinned No. 1. "You do, and you don't, eh?"

"First yes and then no; disgusting I call it," added Brown; "here, let's get along with him."

And then scouting my further suggestion that I should be allowed to appeal for guarantee of respectability to Doubleday and Watson, I was ignominiously lugged along by my captors, whose patience was evidently about exhausted.

A sympathetic burglar caught in the act may partly enter into my feelings at that moment—though he could not comprehend the depth of my chagrin. Nice result of an idiotic joke! Oh yes, it's easy to be wise after the event.

How I admired the superior wisdom of my two confidants in themselves keeping out of the mess—though I hated them at that moment for urging me on with their silly bets to make such an unspeakable exhibition of myself as I should cut in the dock in the morning. I could have wept with annoyance—and am not sure that I didn't. For I well knew that even if I could prove my innocence of real burglarious intention—of which I began to be seriously in doubt—I should be driven wild with the chaff of the Johnnies in my office. I could already hear their references to "the prisoner's appeal for mercy?" etc. While Maude—oh, Maude!—what would she think? And Maude's mother—what would she say? A cold shiver went down my back as I thought of the inevitable interview when—oh, horrid phrase—I "came out."

Was ever innocent mortal in such a hole? I was at that moment prepared to back myself as a first-class fool against the world—that was almost the worst of it. I had involved myself in the difficulty by my confounded folly.

By this time my captors had conducted me almost to the point of the lane's junction with the high road, and the horror of being haled through the streets in full view of any belated passers-by struck me. I besought my grim custodians to avoid publicity as much as possible, and to permit me to have a conveyance.

"No objection to that," assented Brown, "if one can be found at this time of night." Luckily a cab was discerned a little way down the road, where the driver had presumably been depositing a late fare, and much to my relief it proved to be available—the driver evidently being acquainted with the policeman.

After a short drive, with many turnings, the cab pulled up before large gates. On the latter being thrown open by No. 1, we were driven inside, and the gates were immediately closed behind us.

I was bundled out and hurried across the cobbled yard—being unable to discern anything clearly—and was ushered into a small room smelling of leather and blacking, it seemed to me.

When my eyes grew accustomed to the light I beheld standing in the middle of the floor, shaking with laughter—no other man than—Saunders. And at the instant No. 1 clapped me on the back, and exclaimed in a much less gruff voice than that in which he had before addressed me:

"Well, old man, what'll you have to drink?" Which Brown followed up with:

"I recommend Scotch, my boy." And snatching off helmets and false beards the two policemen stood revealed as—Doubleday and that immaculate "father of a family," Watson! I was wild; oh, yes, I was distinctly wild, but relief was the preponderating feeling. I was so exceedingly glad to be out of the difficulty that I bore the jest with a fairly good grace. They were eager to tell me how carefully they had worked the joke, in conjunction with Saunders, even to having the cab in readiness to take us round by back ways to Saunders' stable yard. How they trotted me, to be sure. Saunders declared that in getting into the house I had made noise enough to wake the dead, and that I was a clumsy sort of burglar. He said my endearments addressed to Pluto had almost moved him to tears. He had heard them from the window at which he was watching for my coming and from which he had signalled to his two confederates in the lane when I was departing with the booty, that they might intercept me at the proper time and place. I was bound to acknowledge that their little plant had been admirably carried out, and that I had unwittingly played into their hands by the very requests which I had made to them in their capacity as policemen. They never told me how they squared the real policemen on the beat, or where they procured their perfectly correct uniforms.

Half a sovereign to Saunders' new groom ensured his silence—though he never saw me afterwards without grinning—and I have no reason to doubt the honourable fulfilment of their promise of secrecy on the part of Saunders, Watson, and Doubleday. Said the latter as we separated for the night—or rather for the morning:

"Well, you won your bet, anyhow. And you know, old man, you said somebody ought to have a lesson on burglary. You've been the pupil this journey." Which I should be the last to deny. That is why it was my last burglary as well as my first. RALPH RODMAN.

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The Last Day is Coming!

In fact, it will be here next week. Therefore, don't delay filling up your coupons. It may make a difference of £1,000 to you. A few strokes of the pen and a penny stamp may bring you a small fortune. Anyway, it brought two people £500 each in the last competition. Closes next week. Don't delay. Enter Now.

TO win this substantial sum of money, all you have to do is to fill up the coupon below, giving in the proper place the number of births and the number of deaths which will occur in the thirty-three great towns in England and Wales for the week ending July 1st, 1899.

Then write down your name and address, and ask the newsagent or bookstall clerk from whom you obtained this copy of "*S.S.*" to insert his name and address in the space provided. Although such a course is obviously to his advantage, it is not compulsory for the coupon to bear his signature.

Newsagents and bookstall clerks may sign any number of coupons.

To the person whose attempt is correct we will pay the sum of **£1,000.**

To the newsagent or bookstall clerk whose name appears on the winning coupon we will pay the sum of **£100,** and **£5** to each of the boys attached to the bookstall from which the paper was bought.

If no competitor estimates the correct number of births and deaths, the £1,000 will be awarded to the individual whose forecast is most nearly correct.

In the event of two or more persons being correct, the £1,000 will be divided amongst them. This condition applies also to the £100 for the newsagent or bookstall clerk, and the £5 for bookstall boys.

One competitor may send in any number of attempts.

It must be clearly understood that all persons who enter for this competition must abide by the decision of the Editor in any question that may arise in connection with the competition.

As a guide to your estimate we give below the number of Births and Deaths which have taken place in the thirty-three largest towns in England and Wales for the corresponding period during the past three years.

The figures published by the Registrar-General will be taken as correct. On December 2nd, 1898, a competition similar to this was declared legal by the Appeal Court.

Registered during the Week Ending July 4th, 1896.		Registered during the Week Ending July 3rd, 1897.		Registered during the Week Ending July 2nd, 1898.	
Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.
6,372	3,691	7,115	3,106	6,575	3,203

All attempts to be addressed to the Editor,* Short Stories, *Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and the envelope to be marked in the left-hand corner with the word: "Births."

This Competition closes on Wednesday, June 28th.

S. S.

My estimate is - { *Births* ..... / *Deaths* ..... } *Write in large Figures.*

Name .....

Address .....

*Newsagent or Bookstall Clerk** .....

.....

* If a bookstall clerk, the name of the station will be sufficient.

THIS PRIZE IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH "PEARSON'S WEEKLY," "HOME NOTES," "SUNDAY READER," AND "PASTIMES."

OUR LITTLE MISTAKE.

"WELL, there's no good in arguing, Jack. I say that the man who denies that the face is a reasonable index to the character, is either an ass, or a very vicious-looking fellow."

"Which am I?"

"An ass," I said.

"Is my face an index to my character?"

I did not quite know what to reply, for I could hardly say that Jack's face indicated any asinine qualities. He laughed.

"Joking apart," I said, endeavouring to get out of my difficulty by turning the point, "there is a great deal of truth in the theory. I have a very firm conviction on the point."

My friends say that it is one of my faults that I am always so cocksure.

"And I have a firm conviction that the theory is all rot. One of the saintliest men I know has a face you wouldn't hesitate to put down as that of a drunken prize-fighter."

"I question it," I said; "I'll agree that the features are not to be relied on. The mere features don't give any infallible rules. But the information they give, combined with that we get from the expression, is about as near infallible as any information can be. The eyes give the most valuable clue to a man's character."

"You are never in doubt as to whom you may trust, then, Will?"

"Never," I said, emphatically.

Marsden picked up a scrap of newspaper lying on the table, and glanced at it. There was a portrait on it.

"What sort of a fellow should you judge that to be?" he said, covering the reading matter with his hand, and holding the slip before me.

The face was that of a man in middle life. The brows were dark and heavy, the forehead low, nose broad and lips slightly protruding. You can't get much information from the eyes as they are shown in a newspaper print, but I did not like what I could see at all. I had no hesitation in pronouncing the man to be a criminal—very likely a murderer—certainly of a brutal, coarse nature.

"By Jove, you're right!" said Jack, "for once. It appears from this above that he is a man who's murdered his wife. The police are on the look-out for him everywhere."

"Don't say there's nothing in my profession again," said I.

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the meal we had ordered.

Jack Marsden and I were spending our summer holidays together in making a cycling tour through the Eastern counties. It was one of the peculiar things about our companionship that we could never be together for half-an-hour without falling into an argument of one sort or another, and very often these arguments were so rancorous as to lead to temporary coolnesses between us. At the same time, there was no fellow I would as soon spend a day or two with as Jack, and I believe he would have confessed the same feeling with regard to me. We worked in the same office, we lunched at the same restaurant, we frequented the same club, and, in spite of our "incompatibility of temper" we were pals.

We had had a hard day of it that day, and both being thoroughly tired out, we had decided to spend the night at the little village of Clayton, where we found ourselves at about six o'clock. The roads had been bad, and the day sultry, and we were both of us glad to sit down in the cool, little snuggery of the "White Horse" Inn.

After tea, Marsden announced his intention of having a look round the place, and when he was gone I allowed myself to sink into a doze. I slept until about nine o'clock, when I was aroused by the clatter of knives and forks. The landlord was setting supper for a big man who sat at the other side of the room. I looked round for Jack, but he had not yet returned. I rose and lit my pipe—I always like a smoke last thing at night—and as I was lighting it I glanced round at the newcomer. He was very tall—over six feet I should think—and was dressed in a shooting coat and gaiters. His clothes—which were apparently of a very good quality—seemed to sit awkwardly upon him, and he did not seem to be at all at home.

To my surprise I found his face perfectly familiar to me. I seemed to know him thoroughly well, but I could not think who he was. I was surprised that he did not recognise me, but began to talk to me as one would to a stranger. We chatted for about half-an-hour, and then Marsden came in. I was dog-tired, so I went to bed and left him eating his supper.

I think it must have been about three o'clock in the morning when I awoke. The stranger had been very much on my mind when I went to sleep, for I had been puzzling a good deal as to who he could be. I think I must have been dreaming about him, too, for I certainly awoke with nothing else on my mind. Dawn was just breaking, and I lay awake, thinking lazily over yesterday's events, when a recollection flashed over me that made me spring up in bed. I knew who that man was! I knew where I had seen his face! It was his portrait that Jack had showed me in our dispute the previous evening. There was no doubt of it in my mind. The low forehead, the broad nose, the lips—I recognised them all. And when I remembered the awkwardness with which his clothes sat on him, I was still more confirmed in my opinion that he was a criminal in disguise. He was well disguised too, for, except that little awkwardness, he would have passed anywhere for a gentleman. How blind I had been not to recognise him before!

I sprang out of bed, and begun to dress myself nervously.

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A notorious murderer was in the house, I was sure of it. The man with whose name the papers were full was sleeping beneath the same roof. I was convinced that no time was to be lost.

Very likely the man intended to get off before the house was awakened, and it was already growing light. Fortunately I knew that Jack's room was next to mine, so I stole softly in and awoke him.

It was some minutes before I could get him to understand what I meant. When I did so he sprang out of bed with a bound.

"By Jove, Will," he cried, "you're right. I've been puzzling myself with just the same thing. What's to be done?"

"Did you see a police-station in the village?" I asked.

"No, there only seem to be twelve or thirteen houses. I'll tell you what, Will, you must run over to that little town we passed through yesterday—Drantwich, isn't it called?—and fetch a few men back with you, and I'll stop here and watch. You ought to be back by half-past four at the latest."

"Wouldn't it be as well to call the landlord?"

"Perhaps it would. The difficulty is, we don't know where he sleeps, and we might have to wake half the house, which wouldn't be wise."

"No, I think it will perhaps be better for me to go straight on, and when I come back there will be somebody up. And you can watch about in the lane, and prevent the man from getting away. By-the-bye, Jack, what's his name?"

"It's Tim Hooligan. He's an Irishman, of course."

"Well, I'm off. Keep a sharp look-out."

So saying, I stepped downstairs as softly as I could, and opened the door—the key was in the lock. I found my cycle where I had put it in the stable, and went out into the clear morning air.

It was about two miles to Drantwich, but it took me rather a long while to get there as it was nearly all uphill. It was a lovely morning, but no one was about to enjoy it. I did not meet a soul until I entered Drantwich.

I had very little difficulty in finding the policeman's house, which was also the police-station. I rung violently, and soon brought him to the door. He was a big, red-faced, sleepy-looking man, and I had a bit of difficulty in driving my story into his head, but when I did so he showed more alacrity.

"Just wait till I go and dress myself, and then we'll go and wake Jim Murphy. He often helps me when I've tough jobs on."

The man reappeared in a few minutes, and we went down the village street together. Jim Murphy swore a little under his breath at the way we had disturbed his slumbers, but was soon ready to accompany us. We set out together along the country road, I wheeling my machine whilst I narrated the whole incident to the two men. I felt very excited, I must confess, and also a little elated. I am afraid that I was not entirely free from conceit at the cute way in which I was managing things.

But what was my surprise, when about half-way to the inn, at meeting Marsden, walking slowly along in the middle of the road, and apparently in a very bad temper.

"You can go back," he said to the men, as he approached us.

"What's the matter? Has the man escaped?" I called out eagerly.

"No, the man's in bed—best place for a fellow this time of morning. The matter is, that we're a thundering pair of fools."

"Speak for yourself," I interrupted. "But we must not lose any time if the man's there."

"It's no use the police coming on at all," said Jack irritably. "I tell you the man is no more a murderer than I am."

"Do you mean he isn't the original of that picture."

"He is the original. But he isn't a murderer for all that."

"Explain yourself," I said, angrily. "Don't keep us standing here like idiots."

"Well, it's this way. When you had gone, I stood about in the lane, smoking, for about half-an-hour, and nothing happened. Then I bethought me to have a look at that paper, to make sure that it was all right. I went into the snuggery softly. The shutters were in, and the place was quite dark, so I struck a match. I found the paper, and looked at it. Here it is."

I glanced at it, and saw that it certainly was a portrait of the man we had come for. But I also saw that the name beneath the picture had been torn away. The print above, however, was a description of the murderer.

"Well?" I said impatiently.

"Well, I saw that it wasn't quite certain that this was a portrait of a murderer after all. I began to have some misgivings. I was standing thinking when that old fool of a landlord appeared at the door. He must have heard me strike the match. Evidently he thought I was a burglar, for before I could stop him, he had fired an old gun at me. It did not hit me, but it's broken a vase that was on the mantelpiece. So there's that to pay for."

"Never mind," I said eagerly. "Go on."

"I explained matters to the landlord, and he at once informed me who the gentleman upstairs was. He is Colonel Henderson, the member of Parliament for Drantwich division. I asked him if this was his portrait, and he replied:

"'Yes, it is. It came out in the *Eastshire Chronicle*.'

I don't know why the idiot should have laughed."

Neither do I. I have no patience with men who laugh at a little blunder like that we had made as though it was a good joke. I could have knocked those two policemen down.

We were very glad to get out of Clayton before the tale got abroad. JESSIE WHITAKER.

AN Englishman shooting small game in Germany remarked to his host that there was a spice of danger in shooting in Africa.

"Ah," said the host, "you like danger mit your sport? Den you go out shooting mit me. De last dime I shoot mine bruder-in-law in de schtomack."

A WOMAN'S smile is thus described in a Hawaiian romance: "Her rich red lips parted, and there flashed upon the landscape two rows of beautiful white teeth. Slowly her mouth opened wider and wider; deeper grew the dimples in her bronze cheeks; brighter danced the sunbeams in her eyes, until a stray ray, darting through the foliage of an overhanging bough, illuminated the deep cavern of her mouth, bringing into view the back part of her head. Then, seeing us gazing intently upon her, she shut her mouth, and darkness fell upon the scene."

STORYETTES.

We propose to devote two pages of Short Stories to short, humourous stories, similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of Miss Winifred Graham's novel, "When the Birds Begin to Sing," to each of the next best five. In the course of time we shall particularise these stories, that is to say, one week we shall ask for Anecdotes relating to Cricket, and another week Anecdotes relating to Bicycling. At present, however, jokes of any sort will do. All attempts for this week's prize must reach the Storyette Editor, Short Stories Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., by Monday, June 26th. *Post-cards only, please.*

How Could He Mis-Spell.

A story is told of a politician, whose education was somewhat defective, and who was not a "born speller." He became prominent, and his correspondence, therefore, had a certain importance. One day a particular friend came to see him and said:

"Look here, William, you must have a secretary to write your letters, and never undertake to write any yourself."

"Why?" asked the public man.

"Because people are laughing at your letters, and they will do you harm."

"Why do they laugh at them?" in astonishment.

"Because you make so many mistakes in spelling."

"Mistakes in spelling!" exclaimed the great man. "Nonsense! I read my letters all over after I write them, and I never find a mis-spelled word."

She Told Him.

His arm, which had been resting on the back of the little settee on which they sat in the gloaming, slipped down and encircled her slender waist.

"Clara," he whispered, "we shall be very happy, sha'n't we?"

A soft sigh was her only audible response, but she nestled closer to him, and he appeared to be satisfied.

"Clara," he said, after a long pause, "we ought to have the clearest understanding about everything that affects our future, ought we not?"

"Yes," she murmured.

"Clara," he said again, after a long pause, "can you cook?"

There was another long pause.

Then she straightened herself up, looked him squarely in the eye, and proudly answered:

"Reginald, I can cook potatoes in fifteen different ways!"

Then she put her head down where it was before, and into her pink, shell-like ear he warbled incoherent outpourings of joy.

A Lively Bill of Fare.

It was a country hotel. The single stranger who sat down to dinner was amazed when the waiter handed him a printed bill of fare, which began with oyster soup and ran down to four kinds of fruit tart and chocolate ice cream.

"I'll take oyster soup," said the guest.

"Y-e-s, but we haven't got any," replied the waiter.

"Very well, give me some baked cod."

"We are out of that, too."

"Then bring me roast fowl and fried potatoes."

"We haven't got any of 'em, sir. All we've got is cold beef, b'iled 'taters, asparagus, and bread."

At that moment the landlord entered the room and the guest called out:

"Look here, landlord, what sort of trick do you call this?"

"What? Oh, that bill of fare? My dear sir, let me explain. My uncle kept a seaside hotel, and he failed. He had thirty thousand bills of fare on hand, and I bought them at a private sale for six shillings. These are hard times—ve y hard—and we must utilise everything, and keep up style at the same time, you know."

A Novel in Two Chapters.

Chapter I.

Some three moons ago a soulful-eyed young man was stepping out of the Theatre Royal vestibule when a timid, blushing little maid tripped up and lisped:

"Oh, sir, could you tell me the exact time? Papa was to have met me here, but he hasn't come, and I'm *so* afraid I shall miss the last train home."

Then there came the graceful uplifting of the young man's head gear; the noisy rattle of a passing cab; the faintest flash of a shining top-hat as the agile maid skipped in; the young man followed, and away drove the cab to the station.

Chapter II.

It was the first night of a new melodrama, and as a youthful, manly form strolled silently out from the theatre, a rustic-looking damsel came slowly up, and said:

"Oh, sir, could you tell me the exact time? Papa was to have met me here; but he hasn't come, and I'm *so* afraid I shall miss the last train home."

"That's all right," replied the neat young man; "but, if I remember rightly, you missed your papa about this very hour three months ago, and on the same date I missed my watch, a set of studs, and 27s. 6d. in silver, and was summoned by a cabby because I couldn't pay his fare. You caught your train with my assistance that time; I shall have to ask you to let this gentleman assist you to-night. Here, policeman——"

Slow music—curtain.

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Economy that Paid.

A NEW system of economy is said to have been discovered by a charitable gentleman. He noticed a poor man with a wooden leg one day walking past his hotel, and gave him a shilling. The next day he saw the supposed beggar, but he had changed the wooden leg from the right to the left leg. Enraged at the deception, he went up to the man and exclaimed:

"You rascal, you had the wooden leg on your other leg yesterday! You are not lame at all."

"Sir," was the response with dignity, "I never said I was. I wear a wooden leg for economy, so as not to wear out my trousers, and I change it to prevent one leg of the trousers wearing out before the other."

He Didn't Like Orations.

THE following little scene is authentic, and might, if necessary, be described with all due particulars of name and place: A prisoner at one of our criminal courts was convicted of an outrageous crime. The judge began to sentence him with the usual sermon in manner and form following:

Judge: "Prisoner at the bar, you stand convicted of a most abominable crime, one equally brutal and cowardly; you——"

Prisoner: "'Ow much?"

Judge: "Eight."

Whereupon, without more ado, the prisoner was removed, and the officer of the court recorded sentence of eight years' penal servitude.

How the Duke Managed It.

COUNT HERBERT VON BISMARCK, while staying with one of our English dukes some years ago, was being shown round the estate by his host, when they came across a house to which the duke pointed, saying:

"Ah! the tenant of that house has been a thorn in my side for many years. He is opposed to me in politics, and he always votes against me. But I've cured him at last."

"Indeed," said the visitor. "I see; you turned him out."

"Oh! no," said his noble host; "we don't do that sort of thing in this country. I simply lowered his rent a pound, and so deprived him of his vote."

A Crooked River, Indeed.

A CORRESPONDENT, in giving a description of the Rio Grande River, says: "Imagine four of the crookedest things in the world; then imagine four more twice as crooked; and then fancy yourself on a large river three times as crooked as these put together; and you have a faint idea of the crooked disposition of this terribly crooked river.

"There is no drift-wood in it, from the fact that it is so crooked that timber can't find its way far enough down to lodge two sticks together; but few eels, because it is not straight enough to swim in; and the fish are all in the whirlpools in the bends, because they can't find their way out.

"Birds frequently attempt to fly across the river, and light on the same side they start from, being deceived by the different crooks!"

He Made the Bells Ring.

RECENTLY, at one of our large hotels, while a party were holding an argument on the subject of spiritualism, a wag volunteered to express his belief that there was something in it, as he himself was a sort of "medium."

"How a medium?" inquired one of the speakers.

"Why," replied the wag, "I can do a good many mysterious things; for instance, I can make a bell ring without touching it."

The other offered to bet him he could not. The wag persisted, and said he would lay him five pounds he could make at least a dozen bells in the passage ring within two minutes, without leaving his seat.

"Done!" exclaimed the sceptic, and the money was staked. The wag turned round on his seat, opened a cupboard-door, and turned off the gas from the upper part of the building. In less than one minute half the bells in the passage began to ring violently, the persons above having suddenly lost their lights. And so the money was fairly won.

The Lost Fusee.

AFTER the races last week, a well-dressed man was seen groping on his hands and knees in the midst of a muddy road.

"What have you lost, sir? What is it?" asked the crowd, who assembled rapidly. The man only shook his head. But the crowd went in crowdfully, nevertheless, for the pursuit of the supposed diamond pin or roll of bank-notes. Operations were kept up vigorously for a quarter of an hour, the number of the searchers increasing every minute. At last, with a sad, dejected air, the man rose.

"Never mind," he said, "we shall never find it. It was my last fusee! Perhaps one of you fellows can give me one!"

Bought His Own Fish.

A YOUNG man, who was trout-fishing in the country, followed a brook with no success until it passed under a railing. He climbed the railing, and, as he cast his fly at the root of a willow-tree, he observed that a gaunt rustic was watching him. Finding, however, that he made no protest, the young man continued fishing, and presently he had seven fair trout in his basket. As he placed his foot on the lower rail to depart he was accosted by the countryman, who said grimly:

"Drap them trout!"

The young man hesitated.

"Drap 'em, or I'll drap you into the brook!" continued the countryman.

The young man then emptied the contents of his basket and climbed the railing, saying, as he reached the safe side:

"Well, I have met mean men, but, for generous, whole-souled meaness, you beat them all!"

"Hold on, young feller!" said the farmer. "I ain't mean. If I'd wanted to be mean I'd ha' stopped you fishin', or charged you half-a-crown for the chance. Now if you want to buy a nice string of fish, you can have 'em for a florin, and I reckon they're cheap at the price."

The young man paid the florin.

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THAT STUDENT GIRL.

A CROTCHETY and contrary old chap was Dick Shellen a rich old farmer, as stubborn as a mule. He had made his way in the world by the doggedest obstinacy—seizing hold of whatever came in his way, and retaining hold, as though life depended upon it.

Shellen had one son—a handsome, clear-headed young man—straight as a young larch, tall and as tenacious in his way, when he chose to have one, as old Dick himself. This son, as he grew up, had proved a great assistance to his father in working the farm, and his services had been made the most of.

The old man managed to keep him at home with him some time after he ought to have been doing for himself. Not an acre of his father's possessions was ever called his son's; he owned nothing, save a horse, which some neighbour had given him when it was a sickly colt, and some sheep obtained in much the same manner; and the old man grudged him the keeping of these.

Shellen and his son differed often, but there were two points in which the difference amounted to something serious. The first point concerned education, for which the old man had the most profound contempt, and the son had not. There was a college some dozen miles from the Shellen farm, and thither—having thoroughly prepared himself in spite of fatherly thwarting and opposition—Henry betook himself, and by one contrivance and another, and helped by his mother's small marketing, kept himself there for several months.

The second point was not likely to be of so easy of arrangement.

At college Henry had found something besides scholastic honours. He had chanced upon a very charming combination of curls and azure eyes, a red-lipped, dimple-cheeked fairy, daughter of one of the professors who, instead of curving her dainty lip at the home-spun suit which his poverty and his father's niggardness compelled him to wear, never seemed to be conscious of anything or anybody else when he was near.

In short, Henry had found some one to love, someone that he wanted to marry, as he gravely informed his father. You should have seen the old man's eyes; it was a mercy they were fast in their sockets. "Marry a girl student—it was ridiculous!"

"And pray what harm is there in being a girl student?" questioned Bertha Halmstead, when Henry told her, half laughing, half vexed, and altogether rueful; for without assistance from his father he could not marry her for a long time yet.

Henry laughed again, but with some embarrassment, saying, "My father is afraid that a daughter of Professor Halmstead would not make a very good farmer's wife."

"Does he think—" Bertha hesitated, looking with smiling perplexity at her little white hands.

"That these pretty hands don't know much about baking, etc.? Exactly; I believe he thinks that."

"Then he thinks wrong," said Bertha, reddening and looking up at her lover with a comical little pout. "Didn't I hear you say you wanted a servant at home? I've a mind to go down and offer to take the place."

Henry laughed.

"We want one badly enough, but my father will not suffer one inside the house."

"Why, how do you live then? Who cooks for you now that your mother is ill?"

"We do our own cooking," Henry said, with a return of the half-smiling half-embarrassed expression. "We cook for ourselves or do without."

The very day succeeding the one which witnessed this conversation Henry was at home busying himself over some culinary operations, when the outside door, which stood ajar, was noiselessly pushed wide open, and a singularly-attired form presented itself on the threshold. It wore a red and green plaid dress, the checks very large, a yellow shawl and a very tumbled white bonnet. A red feather, nearly as long as his arm, streamed from one side.

The face, what could be seen of it, was a very curious

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one to be inside such a bonnet. Just now, as she surveyed the kitchen and Henry, herself unseen, the muscles about her mouth twitched nervously and her eyes twinkled with roguish brightness.

Presently Henry looked that way. Instantly the face took a lugubrious length, and coming into the room, the girl said hesitatingly, but without looking at him:

"An' would ye be afther enjoying a servant the day?" and stood fidgeting with the fringe of her shawl.

"I believe not," said Henry, colouring with some annoyance, perhaps, at the nature of his employment.

"Shure, sir, an' the lady that sint me said you'd be shure to take me on her recommendation, which I has in my pocket, and here 'tis now."

She gave him a note, which proved to be from Miss Halmstead. Henry read it with very lover-like carefulness, but shook his head.

"I'm very sorry, my good girl, but we do not wish to hire a servant."

"Belike your father mayn't object when he sees me," the girl persisted.

Henry looked at the soiled white hat and red feather and repressed a smile, wondering what his father would say. But he was of too kindly a nature to be willing to expose even this servant to his father's rough manner. He repeated what he had said before, assuring her that it would be of no use to see his father.

The girl stood a moment.

"If you plase, sir, I'll just see him a moment. Belike he may take a likin', to the look of me."

And before he could reply she had crossed the room and stood upon the threshold of the next. Henry followed presently, curious to see what kind of a reception she would get.

"Shure, an' I'll be worth a lot to yees," she was saying with innocent emphasis, as Henry entered.

She talked rapidly, pouring out such a torrent of words that the old man could not, by any possibility, slip one in among them, and sat regarding her with an expression of the most ludicrous astonishment.

This remarkable volubility completely baffled the old man's slowness.

He could not say a word now, if he wished to, and she concluded with "I can bake bread that'd bring the very eyes out iv yer head and make ye swally ye tongue with delight."

He could only twirl his thumbs in a sort of ridiculous awe, and asked her with a sudden smile how much she expected "to get for doing all these things."

The end of it was that her services were accepted and she began work at once.

Henry deliberated and furtively watched her. For some time she seemed unconscious of his scrutiny; but presently she turned, and clasping both her little hands upon the top of the broom-handle, said, with a mixture of bravado and archness too natural to be mistaken:

"Well, Henry, what do you think?"

The young man laughed and looked annoyed in the same breath.

"Then it is you, Bertha?" he said; "I was suspecting something of the sort."

"Not till I looked at you," said the girl roguishly retreating as he approached.

"Do you think it quite the thing, Bertha?"

"Shure, an' why ain't it the thing for a poor girl to be gettin' her living dacently and honestly?"

And that was all he could get out of her. Having acknowledged her identity with Bertha, for an instant, she was the most unapproachable Biddy the next, and would have nothing to say in that character.

"Does your father know of this, Bertha? What would he say?" persevered Henry.

"Shure, an' it's not me own fadder would be interferin' wid me, would he?" said Biddy.

In vain were all remonstrances with the roguish and wilful girl. She persisted in being Biddy, even to him, and maintained a distance between them very different from that between him and Bertha in her own proper self. Annoyed, provoked, chagrined, almost angry, the advent of his father forced him to retire from the kitchen, for fear of betraying her secret, which he would not have done for a good deal.

It was several hours before he could return to the house, his father having upon one pretext or another detained him.

When at last they entered together, kitchen and sitting-room, both of which had been in a most untidy state when they left there, had undergone such a remarkable renovating process that old Shellen drew back at first, thinking he had set foot in somebody else's house instead of his own.

Supper was smoking on the table; such a supper as old Shellen, at least, had not seen for months. To crown all, Mrs. Shellen was sitting propped up with pillows in a great easy chair, and looking wondrously contented, and with reason—the poor lady had not had a woman's hand about her before since her illness. They lived in such an isolated, inhospitable manner that very few of their neighbours even knew Mrs. Shellen was not as well as usual. Biddy, as she called herself, had tidied the poor lady up in a wonderful manner.

Shellen sat down to the daintily-spread table and made a most hearty and keenly-relished meal, glancing askance at Biddy meanwhile. Henry, strange to say, ate very little, and he watched Biddy askance, too.

This was only the beginning of reforms this darling girl instituted. First, however, for her own peace of mind as Henry's—knowing that mother and son were fast friends and always of one opinion—she told her secret to Mrs. Shellen, and fairly wheedled the good lady into approval.

It is true that she shook her head at first, and looked wondrously shocked. It was so charming to have those little soft hands fluttering about her, and to see such brightness and comfort spring up around, that she could not, for her own sake, help countenancing, as much as silence could, Biddy's mysterious presence.

Having made a good beginning, Biddy established herself in a short time completely in the good graces of the old man.

He had a lurking fondness for neatness and good order, and Mrs. Shellen, poor woman, wasn't a very tidy housekeeper. Under the new reign order grew out of chaos; the house seemed in holiday garb all the time, and an atmosphere of social cheerfulness pervaded everywhere.

One morning, Biddy had said something the day before, the old man ended a grumbling complaint of Henry's with "I never see no good come of eddication yet. If it hadn't been for that college business you might have taken a liking to a sensible girl, and she to you."

He glanced at Biddy as he spoke. She turned scarlet and came near dropping the dish she was holding. It was not the first time Henry had heard such insinuations, and he rather enjoyed Biddy's trepidation.

"Look here, father," he said, Henry smiling mali-

ciously, "just pick me out a wife, and see what will come of it."

"The only girl I know of worth having wouldn't have you, I dare say—would you Biddy?" Shellen said grumblingly, but suddenly turning to the girl, Bridget O'Flynn had kept Bertha's lover at a tantalizing and unrelenting distance all that time.

He was taking his revenge now. Making a desperate effort, Biddy rallied her confused senses to say, with considerable self-possession:—

"Shure, sir, an' it isn't myself that'll be after having any man till I'm asked?"

"Biddy, will you marry me?" said Henry, gravely extending his hand.

"I will that, now," said Biddy promptly putting her hand in his, while old Shellen came near choking himself with amazement.

It was too late to recede, however, whether he had really wished such a thing or not, as they soon made him understand. He went out of doors presently, privately pinching himself to ascertain if he were really in his senses or not. Seeing the two standing by the window in close conversation soon after, he crept with the same laudable intention towards them, under cover of the bushes that grew by the house.

"Now, Bertha," Henry was saying laughingly, "what is to be done next? I must say you have managed wonderfully so far; but what do you suppose he'll say when he knows you're not Biddy at all?"

"Not Biddy at all?" screamed Shellen, struck with a sudden suspicion of he knew not what, as he started out of his covert.

There stood Biddy, the white frill of her close cap as immense as ever. She laughed, though, when she saw him, and deliberately taking off her cap, shook her bright curls all about her face, and reaching toward him her little hand, said:—

"Shure, sir, an' ye won't be afther hating a poor girl because her name's Bertha Halmstead instead of Biddy O' Flynn?"

"You—you Professor Halmstead's girl?"

"Professor Halmstead is my father," said Bertha in her natural voice.

"What's that?"

Bertha repeated it.

"And you're not Irish?"

"Niver a bit!"

The old man stood a moment, clouds gathering in his face.

"Well Henry," he said, rather saucily, "you have outwitted me again; much good may it do you. You'd better get out the horses now, and take Halmstead's girl home. He must want to see her by this time."

"Yes, sir." And Henry coloured with mingled anger and amazement.

Bertha did not change countenance, however. Extending that pretty hand of hers again, she said sweetly:

"You'll shake hands with me, sir?"

Shellen turned back and gave his hand awkwardly. The girl took it in both hers, bending her bright arch face towards him, saying:

"I shall come back some time, sir. Will you be glad to see me?"

Shellen hummed and hawed, and stammered out at last:—

"Ye-es; come back, Biddy—I mean Miss O'Flynn—I mean Miss—"

"Bertha," suggested the girl quietly.

"Yes, come back; and the sooner the better. There, Henry, make the most on't!"

Bertha did come back, in a very few weeks, too, and nobody was gladder to see her than old Shellen, though he was a little shy at first of Professor Halmstead's girl. She soon made him forget everything save that she was Henry's wife; and the way he humoured the sly puss to sundry grants of money, refurnishing, and repairing, I couldn't begin to tell.

Roger Thames.

THE BEST BARGAIN.

The Dexters were noted as a family for their shrewdness, and Squire Dexter was proud of it. He called it foresight which enables him to get much for little, and he was elated when he saw the same trait creep out now and then in Don and Aleck, his sons.

Not that the Dexters were dishonest as the world defines dishonesty; the squire would not have done anything that he thought dishonourable, but he had a knack of getting the best of a bargain.

For various reasons Squire Dexter did not keep a horse, which was a sore vexation to the boys. Doll was Mr. Dick's horse, a clean-limbed young chestnut which the squire liked to drive. As he frequently hired the animal, he thought himself quite a benefactor to poor Mr. Dick.

Mr. Dick had not made such a success financially as had the squire. He was a simple, straightforward old man, who had seen nearly all his property slip through his fingers in his dealings with those sharper than himself. The squire said this was due to a lack of business qualifications, and he privately expressed the opinion that the old man should not keep a horse, since he could hardly provide himself and wife with necessaries.

But old Mr. Dick clung to his horse, and as no one except the Dexter boys had evinced much desire to own it, he had encountered no great temptation to part with it.

Now the temptation had come in the form of bodily needs. The old man shivered in his thin clothes that morning as he curried Doll.

"After Doll again?" he asked, with an abortive attempt to cease shivering as the boys rushed into the stable.

"Yes, sir," answered Aleck.

"Your father's getting pretty fond of Doll," said Mr. Dick, giving a last touch to her mane. "I don't see why he don't have a horse."

"Nor I," said Don, impulsively.

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"He might buy Doll," said the old man, slowly.

Don and Aleck exchanged glances. Don slipped on the bridle before he put the question that was crowding for utterance: "Would you sell her?"

"I've seen the time I wouldn't, but it's different now," said Mr. Dick sadly. "I'm getting old, and—and I want the money."

The boys knew what this meant. Last week there had been a rumour that the Dicks would be asking for parochial relief this winter.

"How much will you take for Doll?" asked Aleck.

"It don't seem as if £20 ought to be too much. Doll's got good blood in her—but I do need the money," the old man sighed.

"Will you give father the refusal until to-morrow?" It was Don who put this question. He could not await Aleck's more deliberate speech.

"I'd rather your family should have her. You know how to use a horse, and you like Doll," partly mused the old man.

The squire had told the boys to put Doll to the carriage before bringing her up the lane to the house door, but they could hardly wait to do this, so eager were they to tell the news.

"It's what I call a bargain," said Don emphatically, as he jumped into the carriage.

"Yes," assented Aleck, "father supposed old Dick would want £30 for her."

"Well, Uncle Jack will think it cheap. He paid £200 for a pair and said neither one was any better than Doll."

Soon they were at the gate where Squire Dexter and his brother were standing.

Don screamed out first. "We've struck such a bargain, father!"

Then the two, as they tumbled out of the vehicle, poured out an excited account of their call on the old man. Squire Dexter turned to his brother with a laugh.

"They're Dexters, Jack, through and through. Know a good thing when they see it."

"And will you take her, father?" said Don, as the squire and his brother got into the vehicle.

"We'll see. Uncle Jack will test her."

It was noon before the two men returned.

Jack Dexter was a good judge of horseflesh, and the animal had been closely scrutinized in every particular. As he stepped out of the carriage the eager boys heard him say: "I'd clinch it at once. She'll sell in the market for £50 at least, with that style and action. Sound as a rock, too. I'll find a buyer at that price any day. I'll give you £40 myself.

"Whew, but did you hear that?"

Don whistled ecstatically, and gave Aleck a punch in the ribs that sent him headlong into the empty carriage as they got in to take the mare home.

"I should say I did," grumbled Aleck, rubbing his side. "But it won't do a fellow any good with his ribs smashed."

"We mustn't look too delighted," cautioned Aleck. "Old Dick may repent when we tell him father will come to see him about Doll."

"No he won't. He isn't that kind. He's as straight as a dart, if he is poor. You know father has said more than once that he wouldn't have been so poor if he hadn't been so straight. He's a good old man, and it's a pity he and old Mrs. Dick 've got to come down to the workhouse." Don flicked a bit of hay out of Doll's tail. "And even £20 won't go far to keep them out very long."

"That's true," replied Aleck; "but I'm glad we've got the chance to get the horse as long as he had to sell her, though I'm sorry for them."

Mr. Dick was looking for the return of the horse and met them at the gate. The boys said nothing, according to Aleck's suggestion. But the old man betrayed his anxiety.

"Did you speak to your father about Doll?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Dick. Father 'll be across to see you."

"I wouldn't be in any hurry, only it's all I can depend on for winter," said the old man. "I'd like to get in coal before the price rises, and there's Doctor Smith's bill—he won't like to wait long, and Mrs. Dick's apt to have him any time with her rheumatism—and some flannels for her and then the living."

"Father'll let you know before the time's up," answered Aleck.

"The poor old man has got the price whittled down pretty close," observed Don, as he swung the hitching-strap against the gate-post in turning into the street. It was Don's habit to hit things when he was thinking hard.

"He'd cut it still more, I suppose," Aleck rather curtly replied, "but he wants an overcoat."

Nothing more was said. They hurried in to the dinner table, where the family were already gathered. Jack Dexter was reviewing the horse's fine points, and the squire was in a very jubilant mood. Mrs. Dexter, who had smiled indulgently when Don and Aleck had announced the news to her, now sat silently listening.

After dinner she followed the squire into the hall. "Are you going to buy the horse?" she asked timidly, as she helped him into his ulster.

"I think so."

"But can you afford it?" she ventured, with still more diffidence, for Mrs. Dexter did not often inquire into any of her husband's business.

"Why, you heard Jack," Squire Dexter replied, with a look of surprise. "I can make a good sum. He'll guarantee me a buyer."

"But I thought perhaps you couldn't afford it," she repeated, with gentle insistance, brushing off a bit of mud from the garment and avoiding his eyes.

"H—m," said the squire. He pulled on his gloves and joined his brother without reply.

The boys standing in the door looked puzzled. They followed their father and uncle down the road to Mr. Dick's, while Uncle Jack kept up a one-sided conversation, not seeming to notice that the others were unusually quiet. They found the old man in the stable.

"Stays about Doll all the time now," observed Aleck, as he and Don stopped at the door while their father went in.

Jack Dexter walked up and down outside smoking his cigar.

The squire chatted a few moments on various topics noting involuntarily as he did so how rapidly the old man was ageing. He felt impelled to say, kindly: "We're all getting on in years, Mr. Dick."

"Yes, sir; yes, sir," said the old man, with assumed cheerfulness and an attempt at a smile. "It's all I am getting on in, squire." Then, quickly, as if fearing his visitor was avoiding the important subject. "The boys told you I wanted to sell Doll?"

"Yes, they said so," The squire's tone was perfectly non-committal.

"I do hope you'll take her, squire." Mr. Dick stopped

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before the manger with a scant forkful of hay. "The boys want her, and I do need the money very much just now, squire."

The squire saw the whithered hands tremble, and he felt that it was not from the weight they were holding.

"It'd go hard to go to the poorhouse this winter," sighed the old man. "Perhaps my wife and I won't be here to worry about another winter. Don't say you can't afford it!"

"H—m."

The squire wrinkled his brows, turned on his heel and walked to the door. The boys stepped back and watched him. He looked towards the old house beyond. Mrs. Dick, scantily clothed, was emptying a wash-tub of water. She looked up, saw him and bowed.

The squire raised his hat gravely. The grey-haired woman reminded him of his own mother, dead but a few years. His mother had every comfort, he thought, gladly. It was a shame for old Mrs. Dick to be so poorly provided for as she was. How those two old people would fare and feel in the workhouse! Then his mind ran to the horse. Could he afford the bargain before him? He understood well what his wife had meant.

"Pshaw!" He uttered the impatient exclamation aloud. "The bargain was Dick's own making," thought the squire. "I'm not bound to tell the old man he is letting his horse go far below its value. Or am I?"

The squire grew angry with himself that he should allow such a query to confront him.

"'Taint the money," just then Don observed in an audible to Aleck, giving the stable door a kick as he spoke.

The boys had let nothing escape them. Don had been reading his father's thouguts. The kick called Squire Dexter back to the present. He looked up at the boys. His sons were sharp like himself, he reflected. Could he afford it? He determined to shift the responsibility of the bargain upon the boys. They should decide. As he turned to speak, the old man quavered behind him. The hesitation had worried him.

"I thought it was a good bargain, squire. I'll have to sell her. I might take——"

he squire had whispered to his boys: "I could get the horse for £16. She is worth £50. Shall I beat him down? I'll ave it to you."

"But, father," interposed Don, with a frown, "would that be just right when we took the refusal at £20?"

"And he's got lots of things to get," said Aleck.

"I say he ought to get what's right," said Don stoutly, and Aleck nodded a vigorous assent.

"Mr. Dick!" The squire pulled his coat about him and wheeled upon the old man. "I'm sorry to say that I can't afford the price." The peremptory tone made old Mr. Dick shrink.

"Jack!" The squire turned back to the door. "Come here!"

Jack Dexter had thought it best not to be seen in the transaction. He was used to bargaining, and he thought the sight of a stranger might raise the price. He did not know what kind of a man Mr. Dick was. Then he had wanted to enjoy his cigar. But he, too, had been observing some of the very things the squire had observed, and the cigar had lost its flavour.

He threw it aside in disgust as he stepped inside at his brother's call and saw the white-haired, bent, shabby old man trying to hide disappointment in unnecessary attentions to the animal in the stall.

"This is my brother, Mr. Dick." The squire's tone was cool and even. The old man raised his faded misty eyes and bowed silently. "He'll make you an offer for your horse."

Jack Dexter looked in surprise at his brother. "Not going to buy it yourself?" he asked.

"We can't afford it." The squire made a comprehensive gesture that took in the wondering boys, Mr. Dick and himself. "Make him the offer you made me."

Jack Dexter raised his shaggy eyebrows, glanced at the boys, who were staring straight into their father's eyes, looked once more at his brother, took hold of his own coat-collar and shook himself up. "Mr. Dick, I'll buy your horse for £40."

"What?" the old man gasped.

"I suppose I can add £10 on my own account," said Jack Dexter, coolly, nodding sturdily back at his brother and then laughingly as he saw old Mr. Dick clinging, trembling, to the manger. "That'll make £50. That is what your horse is worth."

"And I could not afford to give what she is worth," said the squire, recovering his most matter-of-fact manner

The Dexters were prompt to act when a decision was reached. A cheque was drawn on the spot, while the squire tried to ward off the broken thanks that Mr. Dick attempted to utter.

"No workhouse, no workhouse," he murmured again and again, causing both men to shuffle about uneasily, and sending Don and Aleck outside for a violent wrestling-match by way of concealing their emotion.

"You'll have a horse when I can afford it," the squire simply said to the boys as the two men came out to find them thus joyously engaged, and to send them back for Doll. He knew that his sons understood.

"I'm glad a Dexter's got him," reiterated old Dick, his bent form straightened up, his eyes beaming, as he stepped quickly about, making preparations for Doll's departure. "It ain't so hard to let her go now. Oh, but it's what a man takes with him when he makes a bargain that shows his religion. You should be proud of your father, boys."

"We are," Don promptly answered, elevating his chin proudly. "It's better than even having Doll our own selves."

But Aleck could not refrain from a boast at the tea table. "I tell you," said he, "it takes a Dexter to make a bargain, though, and this is the best one yet."

The squire looked across at his wife, and she smiled with loving approval. James Bradford.

A French scientist says that insects are unable to distinguish one object from another by its outward shape. The bald-headed man knows better.

A man, courting a young woman, was interrogated by her father as to his occupation.

"I am a paper-hanger on a large scale," he replied.

He married the girl and turned out to be a bill-sticker.

"Get out of the way, can't you?" said a crusty old fellow to a tramp who was encumbering the pavement.

"Yes, sir; but couldn't you do me one small favour?"

"No; I haven't time to bother with you."

"But it ain't much. All I want is for you to take this razor and cut my throat."

"And have you buried at the public expense? Not much. I'm a ratepayer, I am. Get out!"

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.. From Prairie and Backwoods. ..

XIII.—A Run from Apaches.

AS RELATED BY AN OVERLAND STAGE PASSENGER.

Up to about a dozen years ago, when far-western communities became quiet, and the Indian question fell into abeyance, of tourists who crossed the plains nine out of ten were more interested in accounts of "bad" Indians and "bad" white men than in any other topics suggested by the surroundings—rattlesnakes and grizzly bear-hunting taking, respectively, second and third place.

There was a shade more of creepiness in the Indian than in the white desperado stories, owing to the impartiality of the red man in his killing among the whites, his subtleness and his infernal cruelty to captives. In a railway car, anywhere between the Missouri river and the Pacific, let an "old-timer" be drawn into talking of experiences with hostile Indians and quickly he would be the centre of a listening group, all eager to hear and to question him concerning the red Ishmaelites of the western plains and mountains.

"How does it seem to be in a fight with Indians? How do they make their attacks?" would be questions often asked the narrator, and to the second question the answer would be:

"That is what any hunter, or ranchman, or waggon-master on the plains, when Indians were roaming at large, would have given his boots to know. Any man that outlives an Indian fight can tell how they did attack, but no man living can tell how they will come another time.

"The only thing about it that's certain is that it will be in a way you never counted on and at a time you least expected it."

"I travelled for five years by stage and buckboard in Texas and New Mexico without seeing a hostile Indian," said a commercial traveller. "It was in the early seventies, when the Comanches and Apaches were bad in those regions. I was constantly hearing of their doings—of fights with the soldiers, massacres of settlers, and captures of stage-coaches—but having gone so long without running upon them, I began to feel that it would always be that way, and ceased to think much about them.

"It was in September, 1877, that I was travelling on the overland stage coach southward, and was crossing the Jornada by day.

"The Jornada means, in its full name, journey of death, so you can judge from the title the attractions of that piece of country. It is an open plain, stretching from the Rio Grande eastward to the San Andreas Mountains, and the stage trail crossed it in order to cut off a great bend of the river.

"In the seventy miles of desert trail there was but one place where water was to be found—at Martin's Well, a stage station midway in the desert. At the other stage stations the water had to be hauled.

"The overland company at that time had put in three-seated buckboards in place of their covered coaches. There were six passengers on the buckboard this day—four men and a woman with her child, going to her husband at Silver City—and I sat in the seat with Hank Barstow, who was driving.

"Four fine road mules made the buckboard spin, and the weather being fine, we were all feeling well.

"We had taken dinner at Martin's Well, and now, at about half-past two in the afternoon, had passed Point of Roads, and were about six miles on our way to the next station.

"Not a man or beast had we seen on all the wide plain since we left Martin's Well. Off to the east the plain rose in a long swell to a summit about two miles away. In the crystal air of New Mexico one could see everything as clearly at that distance as he would at a quarter of a mile away from the sea level.

"A dark spot came up in view from behind the summit and it rose, lengthening, until I saw that it was a man on horseback. He turned and waved his arm, and I saw others rising into view behind the crest. Then I nudged Barstow, but he already was looking at the horsemen out of the corner of his eye, and he quickened the pace of the mules.

"'Mescalaros,' he said, in an undertone, without turning his head. 'It's a run for our lives now. Better get out your gun if you've got one.'

"My revolver was in the bag at my feet. By the time I had got it out and found that it was in working order, with all the chambers loaded, the horsemen were coming over the summit and speeding down the slope towards us.

"I counted twenty-three when they had all come into view. They were Indians, as could be told by the way they rode. As they came nearer I could distinguish the leggings and calico jumpers that they wore and the bands of red cloth wound round their heads. All carried rifles in their hands.

"As they came down the slope their line kept spreading out, fan-shaped, so that while some were riding in a direction to hit the buckboard, others were making a long reach ahead, trying to cut us off in front.

"Then one of the other passengers caught sight of the horsemen and yelled 'Injuns!' and the excitement on the buckboard began.

"Two of the men, tourists from the east, started upon their seats, shouting to the driver to hurry the mules. The third man, an old-timer in the country, pulled a revolver from his hip pocket, twirled its cylinder and said nothing.

"The woman gave one loud shriek—she had far more to dread than any of the rest of us—then, as her child began to cry, turned to soothe it, speaking cheeringly, with her cheeks as white as chalk.

"The mules were already galloping. The Indians had shortened the distance one-half between us, and Hank Barstow began to use the whip—and language. A mild-spoken man in general, his eloquence rose to the occasion.

"The mules understood him and ran like deer. For half-an-hour it was nobody's race, with the Indians coming so near that they began to fire on us from their saddles. Then we began to draw away from those behind, with five or six Apaches galloping abreast of us half a mile away.

"We were beginning to feel hopeful, in spite of the bullets that zipped about us and threw up dust on the trail, when we heard the sound of a bullet striking, and the right lead mule dropped flat in his tracks, stopping the buckboard so suddenly that we were almost thrown over the dashboard.

"The Indians raised a yell of triumph as they spurred toward us. All seemed lost with us, but Hank Bristow, handing me the reins, sprang to the ground, opening his pocketknife as he ran round to the right mule's head. With my revolver in hand I was calculating how soon I had better begin to use it.

"'Save a shot for the woman when it comes to the last,' Bristow called, as he stooped to cut the harness from the fallen mule.

"But the mule struggled and came to his feet as light as a cat, shaking his head and working his ears as if at a loss to understand what all the delay was about. The bullet, a spent one, had struck his head-stall below the ear hard enough to knock him down, and nothing worse.

"Barstow leapt back to his seat and set the mules flying again, the right leader setting the pace for the others.

"The Indians had gained upon us during the delay, and were firing at short range; twice their bullets chipped the buckboard, and a mule might be disabled at any moment.

"Suddenly out of a gulch fifty yards to our right a horseman rode, a man wearing the United States cavalry uniform. A line of mounted men followed him, and instantly deployed on the level plain. We heard the charge sounded from the bugle, and as the line of cavalry swept towards them, the Indians turned and ran.

"The cavalry rode past us in pursuit of the Indians, and the buckboard went on to the station.

"All that I ever found out about the troop that had come to our assistance was that it was a scouting party—a half company—of cavalry that had crossed the Rio Grande that day, and had come upon the Jornada just in time to rescue us."

XIV.—DOWN ON RED HAIR.

SEVERAL of us were standing in the street opposite the saloon, talking about the last hold-up and how Jake Rawlings had made a nice haul and got clear away, only to be caught a little later, and suffer the usual penalty. We casually noticed a man looking cautiously into the bar, but as we were busy with our conversation we paid no attention to him. A few seconds afterwards our talk was interrupted quite unexpectedly.

We heard a shot fired across the street, followed by a rush of men along board-walks, and went over to find a man lying on the floor of a saloon with a bullet in his side. The bar-tender stood behind the bar with a smoking pistol in his hand, and he was the coolest one in the whole crowd.

He was an old hand at bar-tending in a rough neighbourhood, was Jim, and one of the prettiest handlers of a six-shooter that it has been my lot to tumble across; and I've seen some sport in that way during my time. We were pretty well used to incidents of that kind, yet we all felt just a little excited—except Jim. If we had been in the saloon when it took place, we should have been more calm, but as we hadn't seen the play we felt curious.

"Jim, how did it happen?" demanded the town marshal, who was immediately on hand with two of his deputies.

"The usual way; just the usual way, Tom," was the bland reply. "You've known me for two years and you know I never take a mean advantage of anybody."

"That's so; you've always played fair. I wonder who he is?"

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"Dunno. He was in here yesterday for the first time."

The marshal went over to the man, propped his head up on an overturned chair and examined the wound. The stranger's eyes were open and full of intelligence, and as he looked round on the crowd a faint smile passed over his face. He was a typical border man—rough in dress, rude of speech, and ugly of visage.

As we looked as the stranger, some of us remembered seeing him on the day before. He had come into the place with the appearance of a man who had travelled some distance and done it in a hurry. I remembered thinking that perhaps he had been in some risky piece of business and had found it advisable to shift his quarters without loss of time. But as we occasionally had strangers of his kidney come to the town, and leave again just as suddenly, I didn't worry myself about him.

He chuckled and smiled as he glanced over at the bar-tender. Then he quietly said:

"Look at his ha'r—the colour of it! I've been hunting that colour for the last two years. He'd a made my tenth."

The bar-tender's hair was red.

There wasn't any chance of a doubt about that; Jim's hair was the nearest approach to a danger signal that a human head could get. Not that the colour of a man's hair makes any difference to him, except to bring down upon him a lot of good-humoured joking if it happens to be out-of-the-way in colour or otherwise. We had often joked Jim about it, of course, and he had taken it all in good part; but we didn't expect to see a man with a hole in his body smiling at the bar-tender's wool. What did it mean?

"I heard about him a hundred miles away," resumed the stranger, "and I cum here to wipe him out. Hain't nuthin' agin him that I knows of except his ha'r."

"Then you meant to kill him?" asked the marshal.

"Sartin. A red-headed man got my wife run off with him, and I'm down on that sort o' ha'r ever since. I wanted to give him a show, though, and so I whooped as I started to draw. Gun got tangled, and he got the drop of me. He plugged me plumb centre, and I'm a goner."

The man said it easily enough, like a gambler of long experience who has staked his all—and lost. He looked round at the fellows assembled in the saloon, as though in search of somebody, and we saw him make a movement with his right hand.

"What's this?" said the officer, as he moved the man's body so as to uncover his right hand, which grasped his shotter.

"I—I didn't git it out in time fur the bar-tender, and so I was layin' low fur somebody else. Is there a red-headed man in the crowd?"

"No," answered the marshal, as he looked from one to another.

"If thar war I'd try a pop at him. But I've run up agin a barbed wire fence."

"That's so" replied the town marshal. "It's about certain that you won't do any more shooting in this world."

"I'd like to ha' done a dozen of 'em with red ha'r," sighed the wounded man. "It would sorter comforted me if I'd wiped out a dozen. You're sure ther ain't no red-ha'red man in the crowd?"

"Certain," rejoined the town marshal, humouring him. "Better let me have that shooter of yours."

Reluctantly the stranger gave it up, and the town marshal put it away. The man was getting weak and his eyes closed.

"Where's the doctor?" asked the town marshal, looking round. "I don't see that he can do any good, but he may as well try."

At that moment a doctor, who had been sent for came bustling in. He was a red-headed man. He knelt to examine the wounded man, but the latter waved him off, sat up, and hoarsely shouted:

"This crowd has played me low down. You took my gun away, and then rung in a red-headed man on me! Whoop! Whoo——"

He fell back, gave a sort of shiver, and was dead.

Do not fail to *order* a copy of *Short Stories* for July 8 to be reserved for you.

"THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION"

begins in that issue, and you cannot rely upon getting a copy in the ordinary way, even though you are a regular reader. The demand for this number will be colosal, a d we cannot reprint, so make assurance doubly sure by just reminding your newsman that you will want a copy of the July 8 *Short Stories* kept for you.

A Leeds dentist is said to have a small boy sit in his office who yells at the top of his lungs occasionally. It lends an air of business to the establishment.

An extreme specimen of a dandy alighted from a four-wheeler, and went round to pay the driver, giving him his exact fare. The poor old rack-of-bones mare turned her head to gaze at him.

"Yes," said the driver, confidentially to the horse, as the passenger moved away; "that's the blessed hobject you've been a-drawin' of."

"A man has to die to make anything out of life insurance," said the citizen.

"Oh, no," replied the insurance agent blandly. "It never died yet."

He (after a tiff): "So you persist in breaking the engagement?"

Mature Fiancée: "Certainly. What do you take me for?"

He: "About forty. Better think it over: it may be your last chance."

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A TIP.

Don't be afraid to send only 200 coupons. Sometimes the best competitions ever devised miss five. People say, "What is the use of my going in for it? I won't win anything." These are just the occasions on which you will. If everybody thought the same, your 200 coupons would win you £10 00.

THE RED MEN OF THE DUSK

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ROMANCE.

By JOHN FINNEMORE.

CHAPTER XXXII. (*continued.*)

WHITESOCK'S shrill, whinny of distress at being deserted, went to my heart and I plodded along in the most evil case I had ever found myself. No mare, no money, no weapons, active foes behind me, and a country before, where hiding would be another matter altogether to my last refuge. The only thing in my favour was that I knew every inch of it, and could turn it to the best account.

"Hereford," thought I, "if I can win as far, there will be a chance for me yet," and in thought I ran over the route.

Oxford, too, came into my mind, for Roger had heard that Jack Locking was there, his first harbour proving unsafe. I knew two or three places in Oxford where knowledge of my friend's quarters might be come at, for the city was familiar to me. After some balancing, however, I settled upon Hereford and began to plan my march. As I walked, I came to a rude track crossing the heath, and, following it for two hundred yards arrived at a point where it forked into two branches.

One ran south-west, and in that direction lay Hereford, the other full south-east. The road was soft and sandy, and along the south-western path ran two parallel lines of hoof marks. I remembered that I had directed Ieuan and Dafydd this way, and these must be the marks of their ponies' feet. One set of prints was not clean cut. I looked closer and saw that the pony was very lame.

As I raised my head I noted a peasant at work in the heath not far away. His bill hook rested idle in his hand and he hailed me, but I took no heed of him and turned to the South-east. I pushed on rapidly, running where the ground lay with me, walking fast elsewhere, and soon came to a high ridge commanding the country I had traversed. I looked back and saw no signs of pursuit, then hurried forward at a round pace.

Four miles of this travelling brought me to the edge of the heath, and the road now ran through cultivated land. It took a sudden bend and twisted through a farm-yard, passing between the house and the barn. Crossing from the one to the other was a big, round-faced country fellow, with a great wooden bucket in each hand. He stood at gaze when he saw me, and eyed me in open-mouthed curiosity.

A stranger, hatless and dishevelled, swinging a great quarterstaff as he strode, was a sight worth looking at, and he took his fill. He was directly in my path, and I stared him straight in the face, walked directly up to him, snatched his hat from his head, clapped it on my own, and marched away as fast as I could. He made never a sound, but stood there transfixed with astonishment, gaping at me, pails in hand.

At the corner of the farmyard I turned and glanced back. He had just found his voice, and was roaring out his anger, but still he did not move, and I left him there, a statue of amazement. I am aware that this was using Thomas Buck—for I know him well—very unfairly. But I was playing a game for my life, and this forcible borrowing of a hat was an essential move in that game.

I wanted a hat very badly, and I wanted Thomas to remember and be ready to testify that I had passed his way, and I had attained my object fully. A mile again I reached a little inn, and the landlord stood at the door serving ale to a couple of drovers. All three looked very hard at me, but I slouched my hat and appeared to avoid them. Six miles from Butley I arrived at a little hamlet where some women were talking around a well.

In full sight of them I turned to the left and travelled due east. The land about this part of the country was all unenclosed, and, half a mile from the hamlet, I turned aside and struck back westwards over the open country, moving very carefully along the lower levels, and taking advantage of every scrap of cover.

Two miles wary walking brought me into the heath again, and I pursued my way easily over its lonely face towards the south-west, now at last heading in my real direction.

"There," thought I, "I have laid a good scent along the wrong track for the pursuit that is certain to follow me,

East of that hamlet they will travel miles before it will be possible to gain another clue, and then they cannot be sure I have not passed."

And I thought I had been rather clever. Never once did I dream of the fashion in which the pursuit would be made. After turning my face to the proper quarter I settled my pace at a swift walk, and had made a dozen miles before the sun went down. I had now journeyed over twenty miles since I left Butley, and was hungry and tired. As the dusk fell, I seated myself on the projecting root of a great tree, and leant my back against its trunk to rest.

The air was mild and cool, and full of the sweet odours of the spring. Low in the west the sunset lingered in a broad band of shining sea-green, but eastward all was thick and grey. Presently a dim pall of cloud drew over and the great, slow drops of a spring evening shower pattered around me, filling the air with the delicious scent of newly-moistened earth. A cheerful twittering of birds sounded all over the plain and a thrush in the tree above me sang at intervals two or three notes, full and sweet.

As I sat there, looking back on the day, I saw clearly that it was all my own fault. The letter I had destroyed lay at the bottom of everything. I had had no opportunity of speech with Enid in the interval, and she knew nothing of it. Jack supposed that it was delivered and her civil reception of him would imply in his eyes an acceptance of its contents. Hence his sudden warmth, and presumption and the whole train of consequences.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Ale-house on the Moor.

It was quite dark when I moved on again and within half-a-mile I saw a twinkle of light straight before me. I reflected, and remembered that a small ale-house should be somewhere near at hand, and that must be it. I advanced warily, and soon stood within a dozen yards of the lighted window. If all was quiet, surely I might venture to get some food here. Now that I had a hat my appearance was in no way beyond ordinary for a country fellow. I slipped my quarterstaff under a bush, carefully marking the place that I might find it again, and edged up to the uncurtained window.

The first peep I took cheered my heart like a cordial, and brought the water of desire into my mouth. Beside a cheerful fire stood a table, and on either side of it sat Ieuan Gwyllt and Dafydd.

There they were at ease in their inn, a dish of smoking rashers of bacon and a big brown loaf between them. The good, hearty smell of the fried bacon crept through the crevices of the ill-fitting lattice, and tickled my nostrils richly with its savour. I had been very hungry before, and now my appetite became clamorous for a share of this toothsome banquet. The room was empty but for them, and I stepped forward and lifted the latch of the door. I went in and found myself in a passage which ran through the house. The landlord was coming along it in the opposite direction with a great jug of ale, and I followed him into the room where the Red Men of the Dusk were feasting. Ieuan looked up and saw my face over the landlord's shoulder.

"Well, indeed," said he with his ready smile, as for an expected guest, "you have come at last! Yes, that iss better than not to come at all. Take a drink of ale."

My hand was on the jug with less delay, I fear, than was polite, and I took a hearty draught which could not have given my parched throat more delight had it been fresh-brewed nectar.

"And you will have some supper with me," went on Ieuan amiably. "Come, landlord, some more bacon and a few eggs again. Here iss a loaf big enough for a dozen. We will finish the supper before we begin business. Then we can talk about the prices of things while we sit by the fire with another jug of ale."

Ieuan purred smoothly along, and I nodded a clownish agreement, as became my character, and the landlord bustled about and set out a fresh trencher and a chair before it. I seated myself and began to make havoc of the slices still left on the dish, and the food tasted as sweetly as it had smelt. Ieuan had come pretty well to an end of his meal, and he leant his elbows on the table, took his face between his hands, and watched me with a smile.

"Yes," said he, when the landlord had left the room, "I have a good eye to tell when a man iss hungry. You have run many miles on your feet since you last took some food."

"I have, Ieuan," I replied, "and I thank you for this, I can assure you."

Ieuan waved his hand, as bidding me be easy. "You have taken to the road again, that iss plain to see," he remarked. "How did they find you out?"

"I quarrelled with the fellow you saw at the inn yesterday."

"Yes, yes," agreed Ieuan, "it would be about Owain's sister. I could see that coming very clearly. But he wass not much of a man. His eye wass poor. You took a sword and killed him easy?"

"No," said I, "I did not go so far as that, but I handled him pretty roughly."

"H'm," said Ieuan, rather dissatisfied. "To kill iss the best. You are sparing yourself many enemies by that."

Our conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of fresh customers, a couple of yokels of the neighbourhood who called for ale, and sat in a corner to drink together. They stayed about an hour, and in this time I finished my meal and sat in the warmest nook of the chimney corner drying the last moisture out of my clothes. Ieuan took a seat near me, and we conversed upon the price of cattle, dropping our voices as we came apparently to the pitch of the bargain, until we had reached a point where we could talk of what we pleased. I told him of the line I had taken, and he, a past master in such arts, approved.

"How far iss this, now, from your house?" he asked.

"Not more than twelve miles," I replied. "I have doubled about so. I was surprised to see you had not got further yourself."

"My pony went very lame," replied Ieuan. "He iss only a little one, and my weight has been too much for him on so long a journey, so I stopped here to give him a good rest till to-morrow."

He bit his lip and stared thoughtfully into the fire.

"Now," said he, "here iss the plan. To-morrow morning, before the daylight comes, you must go from this place in my clothes. It iss lucky we are about the same size. Have you some money?"

"Not a penny," I replied.

"Never mind," rejoined Ieuan, "you have a good right to a few pounds out of the little bag here," and he touched his breast where the gold lay, "enough to carry you to a place where you will be safe again. Are you thinking to go far?"

"Within a dozen miles of Hereford."

"A little journey that," said Ieuan. "Well, you take these clothes, when you will look very respectable, and by daylight you must be two or three miles away. Walk to the next town and hire a horse, and off you go. Dafydd and I will slip away with you, or the change in clothes will be seen."

I gratefully consented to Ieuan's plan which held out a good hope of safety, and as the landlord now came to give us his company, it was not possible to discuss the subject further. For a couple of hours he sat with us and prosed about country affairs and local gossip. Ieuan, who had his own reason for doing so, ordered liberal supplies of ale and urged the host to drink. He needed but little encouragement and disposed cheerfully of almost all that he brought. Seasoned toper as he was, his stories at last became shorter and more broken, and his head wagged drowsily. Ieuan

informed him that I should stay the night, and he invited us to go to bed at once. Ieuan declined but went with him to learn where we were to be quartered, and then the door was made fast and the host and his family, a wife and two shock-headed children, got to their bed and left us by the fire. Dafydd had long been asleep, stretched on a bench.

"Ar,e you going to bed, Ieuan?" I asked.

"No I am not," he replied. "I just went to look to make that man easy in his mind. We will sit here and sleep a little till it iss time to start. We shall be more sure not to stop too long."

This was entirely to my mind, and I took some fuel from a st ck in the corner of the room and replenished the fire. We sat and talked for some time again, and then the fatigues of the day began to assert themselves. Ieuan became silent, and before long I slid into a restless slumber.

Of a sudden I awoke, instantly and completely. I had an uneasy feeling at my heart that I had been wakened by a sound of danger; yet all was still. Ieuan had dropped asleep in his chair, and was breathing heavily. The fire had died down, and the room was dark. There seemed to ring in my ears the distant bark of a dog.

"From some farm close at hand," thought I, and stretched out my cramped legs and resolved to sleep no more but watch the rest of the night. I was seated in the corner of a high-backed settle with the window behind me. A faint glimmer seemed to come into the air, and I sprang to my feet. With a beating heart I perceived the window full of a red, dancing light.

I ran to it, and, even as I did so, the loud baying of a hound rang out in the silence of a windless night, and I saw a plump of flaring links not thirty yards away, borne on at a run, and heading straight for the house.

"Ieuan," I called quickly, but my voice was drowned by a great hound giving tongue furiously without. His deep, hollow bark was followed by a whine and a swift scratching at the outer door.

I recognised the note with a bitter sense of betrayal, though the poor brute had done it unconsciously. All my doublings and twistings had been in vain. Ranger had been set upon my track, and led my foes unerringly to my refuge.

Ieuan leapt from his chair and ran to my side.

"Enemies," said he, cool and wide awake at once.

"Yes," said I. "Is there a door behind?"

The light of the torches flashed in through the windows and cast our shadows before us as we sprang into the passage.

"Surround the house," shouted a voice I knew. It was done upon the instant.

The whole building stood open and naked to the moor without fence or inclosure, and while we groped our way along a littered, pitch dark, and unfamiliar passage, our foes outran us.

"Here it iss," said Ieuan, laying his hand on a bolt and half-drawing it.

He growled something and shot it back, as the light of the well-pitched links shone red under the door and through the crevices of its ill-fitting planks.

"I can see them," said Ieuan, with his eye at a crack. "There are four. Two of them carry a light and a sword, and two have guns. They are standing about five yards away, and the guns are pointed at this door."

By this time the knocking was fast and furious at the front door, and the landlord was crying out in a state of alarm.

"He will open when he knows who is there," said I "unless we stop him."

"Dafydd," cried Ieuan softly.

An answering grunt came from the darkness behind us, Ieuan uttered a short, quick command in their own tongue,

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and the dwarf shuffled off to silence the landlord and keep him from admitting our enemies.

"Who wass that who spoke outside?" asked Ieuan.

"Sir John Postgate—a magistrate," I replied.

"A magistrate!" repeated Ieuan. "And iss it certain he has come to fetch you?"

"I think it very likely," said I.

"Well," rejoined Ieuan, "it may be. But it will be best to keep him outside for the good of everybody."

It was scarcely possible that Sir John Postgate could have information which would justify him in detaining my companions but it was clear that Ieuan meant to run no risks, and the truth is that magistrates were no more to his fancy than, at present, to mine.

"If we keep a strong door between us," said Ieuan, "there iss a chance to think of a plan, but if they get in and begin to strike and shoot you cannot see your way at all."

Twice or thrice the loud command to open was repeated amid a rain of blows from musket-butts, and we returned towards the door that was being assailed. Suddenly a stream of light poured on us from behind. We turned and saw the back door wide open, and a tiny childish figure standing on the threshold. One of the children of the house had evaded Dafydd and drawn the bolt. Ieuan gave a great cry and ran. The child started and ran out of the house, and before Ieuan Gwyllt reached the door the torch-bearers leapt in and blocked the way. The passage was wide, and both pushed upon him at once as his sword flew out to meet them.

The torches were eagerly snatched from the hands of the leading men by their companions, leaving them free to handle the Red Man of the Dusk. To handle Ieuan! He fought easily, without hurry or miscalculation. Their blades darted at him from either side and parried every thrust, checked every cut, then when his chance came, drove three inches of the point into one, and, with a lashing twist of his iron wrist, laid open the cheek of the other. Just as he delivered these strokes, I saw a musket barrel thrust between the swordsmen and pushed upon Ieuan's body.

I dropped on one knee behind him and watched the marksman. He was crouched close behind his friends and before the trigger came within easy reach the round, black circle of the muzzle was within arm's length. I shot out my hand as I saw the musketeer drop his towards the lock and wrenched the weapon aside. As I did so the piece was discharged, but the bullet flew clear under my arm. I tugged at the weapon with all my might, and, thanks to the surprise, plucked it clean out of my enemy's grasp. I gave a shout of joy and leapt to my feet and sprang abreast of Ieuan, clubbing the ponderous firelock. The first fellow upon whom I laid it wore, luckily for him, a stout steel cap, but he dropped like a stone and knocked over another against whom he was dashed.

Suddenly I became aware of Jack Postgate. I saw him over the heads of his followers, for he was bringing up the rear. He had raised himself above them, and, I fancy, was standing on a horse block just at the door, the upper part of his body leaning in, while he looked over the fight and shouted commands and encouragement. With a look of malicious triumph he levelled a pistol at me and took careful aim. I bounded furiously at the people before me, striking fierce, butting blows with the iron musket-heel; and thinking how long a time it was before Jack fired, and perhaps I should reach him yet, when his pistol cracked. I drew a long breath when I found my brains still safe inside my skull, yet knew the bullet had cut me somewhere, for I felt blood trickling warm into my neck.

I saw a second pistol in Jack's hand; but he had no time to use it. His followers—stout men of their bands as they were—had had their fill, and they turned and swept through the door, driving him from his perch, and dragging their wounded with them. Ieuan leapt after them, swung the door to, and shot the bolt home—just in time.

(To be continued.)

Minister: "I am exceedingly gratified at the wonderful increase in the attendance of men at our Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evening prayer meetings. For the past week the church has been thronged with men."

His Wife: "It's spring-cleaning time."

Near-sighted Old Gentleman (entering shop): "Have you any linen dusters?"

Young Snobson (with his most sarcastic manner): "I am not a clerk in this establishment *yet*, sir."

N.S.O.G.: "Not yet a clerk, eh? Errand boy, I presume? Well, legs are as good as brains in some departments."

Lady: "What! 2s. 8d. for waiting three-quarters of an hour! Nonsense, man! It was only ten minutes by my watch!"

Cabby (insinuatingly): "Wasn't it, miss? Well, then, I s'pose it was a missin' o' your pretty face as made it seem three-kervarters of an hour!"

Fare pays, and thinks cabby an extremely nice person.

First Sweet Girl: "Oh, it was romantic! We were at Brighton, you know. I got beyond my depth in bathing, and he saved my life, and after that we became engaged. Isn't it lovely?"

Second Sweet Girl: "That's just your luck, dear! I went out beyond my depth six times last summer, and was saved by six different young men, but every mother's son of them was married."

Send us a Post-card, and we will forward you a packet of ——— Well, you will see what they are when you get them.

MORE PARTICULARLY FOR BOYS AND MEN WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

Something Fresh in Magazine Enterprise.

Most people know what a stereoscope is, although it is surprising how few have had the chance of really appreciating the beauty of a picture properly seen through one. By properly we mean properly focussed, so that the figures look real and life-like, and no longer merely images in black and white.

In order that all may have such a chance there will appear in the July number of the Royal Magazine, published on Thursday next, no fewer than twelve perfect stereoscopic slides. All that you have to do is to cut them out and look at them through a stereoscope. They are interesting subjects; in fact, you will get for threepence, in addition to a splendid magazine, fully *six shillings' worth of stereoscopic slides.*

The modern stereoscope, capable of proper focussing, can be bought for half-a-crown. In case, however, you find any difficulty in doing so, all you have to do is to send us two shillings, and we will send you a half-a-crown stereoscope post-free.

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Agents wanted where not represented.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 92A Aldersgate Street, London.

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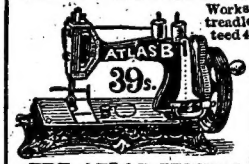

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THE VERY BEST AND MOST UP-TO-DATE.

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Road Racer, £10. 16s. 8d. Monthly.

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METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO. Ltd.,
Juno Cycle School & Works, 75, 76, Bishopsgate Street, Without, E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

Typewriters, £9 9s. 15s. 9d. Monthly.
LIST FREE.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 23 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

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SAFE REMEDY CURES

HEADACHE and NEURALGIA

IMMEDIATELY,

And is sold by all leading Chemists in Packets of 18 Doses, 1s.

To ANYONE HAVING THE LEAST DIFFICULTY, it will be sent post free for 12 Stamps by "KAPUTINE Ltd.," Huddersfield; or, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, A. M. Kaputine, Huddersfield, you will receive a free sample.

The fact that "KAPUTINE" is recommended by many leading Medical Men, and is used in National Hospitals and Infirmaries proves that it is THE, THE recognised SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHES.

Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

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IN FRIENDLY CONVERSE.

S. O.—A correspondent of a scientific turn of mind has collected the smoke deposited on a little plot of ground, and obtained from it two grains of soot. Sup osing that soot is deposited as plentifully elsewhere in the 120 square miles which London covers, he says this would give for the whole area 1,000 tons. As the quantity measured fell in ten days, a month's allowance would need 1,000 horses to cart it off, and these stretched in line would extend four miles. Hence London's black fogs.

ACT.—In the passing of Bills no British Sovereign has ventured to exercise the right of veto—that is, of withholding the royal assent—since 1707.

DINE.—It is computed that 950,000 dinners and lunches are served daily in London restaurants.

R. E.—Beds are quite an innovation in Russia, and many well-to-do houses are still unprovided with them. Peasants sleep on the tops of their ovens; middle-class people and servants roll themselves up in sheep-skins and lie down near stoves; soldiers rest upon wooden cots without bedding; and it is only within the last few years that students in schools have been allowed beds.

BIZ.—March is the slackest month of the year for business.

TEMPLE.—There is a temple of Siva near Allahabad, in India, surrounded by a high mound, composed wholly of the fragments of earthern bottles. On one of the last days of February, from twenty thousand to forty thousand pilgrims assemble, each provided with two or three earthern bottles containing water from the Ganges. These they break and throw upon the mound.

ANGLO.—The number of people at present who speak English is said to be 116,000,000.

T. G.—The Wos, a West African tribe, used to indulge in the custom of killing every male child whose top teeth appeared before the lower ones, believing that the child, if allowed to live, would grow into a man of monstrous disposition.

BIRD.—If you want to encourage birds to come into your garden you should try hanging up a raw meat bone on a stick in the garden. It is considered a great delicacy by the feathered tribes.

MIGNON.—The mignonette is the national flower of Spain.

A. G.—France is the best cultivated country in Europe.

A. R.—Artificial legs and arms were in use in Egypt as early as B. C. 700. They were made by the priests, who were the physicians of that early time.

TONE.—There are forty-eight different materials used in constructing a piano, laying no fewer than sixteen different countries under contribution, and employing forty-five different hands.

LAW.—No fewer than five systems of law are in use in Germany. You pay your money, of course, but you are not allowed to take your choice.

Q.—It is known as a fact in geology, that below the depth of thirty feet the earth becomes regularly warmer as we descend. On an average the increase is at the rate of one degree Fahrenheit for every fifth foot. At the bottom of the mines in Cornwall—a depth of one thousand two hundred feet—the thermometer stands at eighty-eight, equal to high summer heat. At this rate rocks and metals would be melted twenty miles below the surface; and down in the bowels of the earth, several hundred miles, the heat would be ten thousand times hotter than molten iron.

PLAYER.—The idea entertained by some people that violin-playing is bad for the health is not wholly without foundation. Unless care is taken that the instrument is held in a proper position, the chest may be contracted and a young girl may even become hump-backed.

H. T.—King Alfred was personally engaged in fifty-six battles by sea and land.

F. J.—There are about 700 newspapers and journals issued within a radius of six miles from Charing Cross.

BILL.—Theatres in Spain have no programmes. A bill in the lobby sometimes gives the cast; but most of the actors remain unknown by name. The curtain is devoted to advertisements, and in Madrid theatres advertising cards are affixed with the numbers on the back of each seat.

GLASS.—There is one terrible circumstance in connection with the Venetian glass industry, which is that after many years of work, when those employed in this industry are between forty and fifty years of age, they begin to lose their sight, and after a short while become wholly blind. There seems to be no remedy for this.

HAY.—There have been many theories to account for the spontaneous combustion of haystacks. This phenomenon is now ascribed to a microbe which breeds in the close, moist atmosphere of the hay, and causes a fermentation which generates heat and finally ignition.

SALT.—IT is in this country that most salt is produced. The whole world's produce per annum is 7,300,000 tons. Of this quantity 5,280,000 tons are produced in Europe; and of the latter total Great Britain turns out 2,235,000 tons.

A. T. E.—To "dance attendance" is an expression borrowed from the medieval custom which compelled the bride at a wedding to dance with whomsoever asked her. No matter how low the condition or how objectionable the person, the bride could not refuse.

N. E. D.—Snakes are one of the scourges of India. Thousands of people die yearly from their bite. In the last twenty-two years the number of deaths attributed to this cause has reached the enormous total of 433,289.

J. P.—Street refuse in Italy is sold by public auction.

S. T.—Careful weighing shows that an ordinary bee, not loaded, weighs the five-thousandth part of a pound, so that it takes 5,000 bees to make a pound. But the loaded bee, when he comes in fresh from the fields and flowers, freighted with honey or bee-bread, often weighs nearly three times more.

EAST.—Arabic coins have a sentence from the Koran, and generally the Caliph's name, but never an image.

F. S.—Buddhist fishermen in Siam justify their trade by declaring that they do not kill the fish, but only take them out of the water, whereupon the fish die a natural death.

D. P.—In France, degrees and diplomas are granted by the Government, and not by the universities, as in this country.

SIZE.—The tallest and shortest people of Europe, the Norwegians and the Laps, live side by side.

PEER.—There have been thirteen cases on record during the present century of suicide amongst members of the peerage.

SHORT STORIES' ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0	10	0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1	0	0
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is preferred by ladies of refined taste, because, being exquisitely pure, it makes dainty fabric equal to new; and because its pure ingredients having a TONIC action on the skin, it is a delightful soap for the Bath and Toilet, and is especially suitable for baby's tender skin.

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All Men should use it after Shaving.
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"The LILLIE POWDER" has long been a favourite with all who pride themselves on their complexions. Try the LILLIE POWDER. I am sure you will like it."—*The Gentlewoman.*

"I have always used your Lillie Powder after shaving, and have no wish to *ever* use any other."—**Seymour Hicks.**

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"Lillie Powder is most beneficial to the skin, and I shall always use it."—**Phyllis Broughton.**

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"I think your new Lillie Powder most exquisite."
—**Adelina Patti.**

ASK YOUR CHEMIST TO GET IT FOR YOU,

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Invented by Mrs. Langtry. Prepared under the strict supervision of Mr. Wm. Clarkson (Her Majesty's Perruquier)
THREE TINTS—WHITE, FLESH-COLOUR, AND CREAM.

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BANKRUPTCY.—*Re* BRITISH CARPET WEAVING CO.
Late of Old Street, London.

F. HODGSON & SON, of Leeds, have purchased for Cash the whole of the business, goodwill, and effects from the official Trustee in Bankruptcy. Illustrated Sale Prices of Brussels, Axminster, Tapestry, Velvet, and Foreign Carpets and Hearthrugs, can be had post free if when writing you mention *Short Stories*, 24/6/99.

THE "MONARCH"
RECORD REDUCTION SALE

REDUCED SALE PRICE **3/6** EACH. Postage 6d. extra.

STUPENDOUS SALE OF ELEGANT

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FORMER PRICE **5/-** EACH.

In all the latest Oriental Art Designs, Style, Effect, and Colourings. They are equal in appearance to goods costing from 1 to 2 guineas. They measure 3 feet wide by 6 feet long, are extraordinarily heavy, and are guaranteed to wear well, and will never fail to bring orders.

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Yes, two Different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One! (Copyright.)

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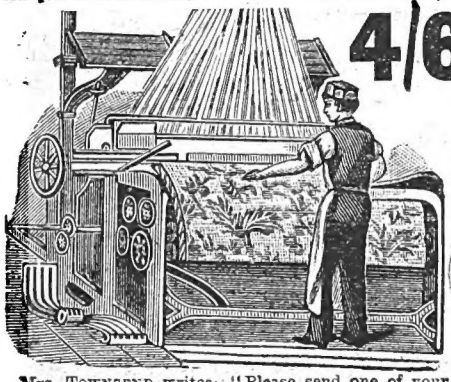

4/6

To Readers of "Short Stories," 24/6/99, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value 4s. 6d. (Regd.) We will send you THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET in BRUSSELS PATTERN WITH RUG ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

Special Offer—2 CARPETS and 2 RUGS, 8s. (*Cut this out.*)

Illustrated Bargain Catalogues of Carpets, Hearthrugs, Table Linen, Curtains, &c., Post Free, if mentioning "Short Stories," 24/6/99, when writing.

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On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amounts we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) **F. HODGSON & SON.**

10 Charlesworth Street, Stockport, 15/1/99.

Mrs. Townsend writes: "Please send one of your 'Reversible' Carpets as soon as possible. I may add we have had one in wear three years, and it has given great satisfaction."

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Reversible, woven throughout, bordered, richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.

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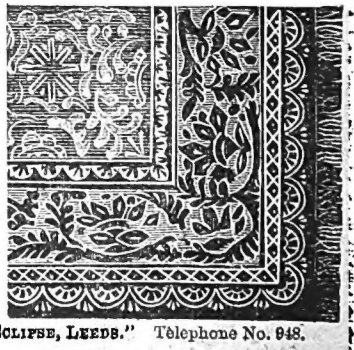

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.) to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 extra, size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. SPECIAL OFFER.—Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8/-, or Twelve for 15/6. Sterling value.

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Mrs. Heelas writes: "Kindly send me a 'Prudential' Carpet, 12 feet by 15 feet, at 15/9. Light shade preferred. I had two the same. They had lasted for seven years."

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